REFORMATION
NOT
SEPARATION:
OR,
Mr. CROFTON's Plea for Communion with the CHURCH, under those Corruptions, and by that disorderly Ministration to which he cannot Conform, nor by it Administer.
IN A
LETTER,
Written JULY 20. 1661.
In, and from the TOWER of *LONDON*, to *R. S.* To satisfie the Weak, and silence the Wicked, who insulted in, or were offended at his endeavoured (and clamorously reported as obtained) attendance on Gods PUBLICK WORSHIP in that Place, during his Confinement.

NOW PUBLISHED,

To silence Censures and Calumnies, satisfie such who would walk uprightly in this houre of Temptation,

By the said *R. S.* to whom it was written.

Unto which, is added the Copy of another LETTER, *Written on the same Occasion and Subject.*

Printed in the YEAR, M. DC. LXII.

TO THE READER.

READER,

IT *is more than a Year, ſince it was clamoured,* Mr. CROFTON goeth to the Church, and heareth Common-Prayer in the Tower of LONDON: *Whereupon he was not little Cenſured by ſome, whoſe Profeſſion of Religion, and Relation to him, required much more Charity.*

Mr. CROFTON *did then write unto me this enſuing* LETTER, *with Advice to Communicate the ſame, for the* Satisfaction of the Weak, *who ſtumbled (to their own wounding) and* Silencing of the Wicked, *who inſulted, to the Grief of him and Gods Church.*

In Obſervation of this Inſtruction, I did (to ſave the labour of the Pen, and make this Paper more profitable to the Church) put it into the Preſs; where ſome good Friends did ſeize, and for preſent ſtifle it; chooſing rather to Communicate the written Copy as they could.

This Copy was imparted to many Chriſtian Friends and Miniſters; who ſeemed to be in this matter otherwiſe perſwaded; in ſpecial, Thoſe of the Congregational way, *who ſeemed moſt concerned in the ſame; theſe were all requeſted to Correct* Mr. CROFTON'S *Errour, and Rectifie his Judgment; but none would, or did undertake the work, though aſſured he had an hearing Ear:* Horreſco referens; *though he hath been moſt bitterly Cenſured, he never received any, the leaſt Admonition*

concerning this matter, one excepted; a Copy whereof, with his Answer thereunto, being come to my hands, I have presumed to annex unto this LETTER.

I presume (*without* Mr. CROFTON'S *knowledge*) First, *To make these Papers publick, to* evidence *the little Cause men have to represent* Mr. CROFTON'S Non-conforming Communion, *to be a Defection from the Cause of Reformation, and Result of his Temptation.*

Secondly, *To let men see on what Grounds* Mr. CROFTON *hath satisfied himself in his solitary Estate, when he could neither Confer with Men and Books; that so if they appear weak, some serious man, may by word or letter* (*whilst the Press will not be allowed to speak*) *help him to Conviction; I cannot but determine it unchristian, to condemn without* Fraternal Correption, *or an Essay for Conviction; those Censures do reflect with Violence on the Censurers, which are retorted with* a what doth your arguing reprove?

Thirdly, *To help others to discover that* Point of Piety *which is proper for their places and capacities, under the present Providences of God in, and towards his Church in these Nations.*

What lately was Mr. CROFTON'S *Case, is now our own; we must either* withdraw *from the Prayers and Publick Worship of God in this Church, or* attend *it by this* disguised Ministerial Mode and Order; *and with Grief I speak it, we are in the dark, and we are left in the dark, our Prophets are gone, who should tell us, and before their going have not told us, how in this Case Christianity doth require us to carry: Some general Cautions we indeed received in their last Councels, but no clear Directi-*

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ons in reference to the ſpecial Caſe and Condition into which we are reſolved: I well know, moſt Presbyterian Divines to be in Judgment the ſame with Mr. Crofton; *but their Prudence doth prohibit the Publication thereof to us, or at leaſt in a particular Specification of our preſent Condition.*

I will not ſay, Mr. Crofton *by his Act or Apology, appeareth any very wiſe Pilate, I leave thoſe to whom it doth belong, to judge his skill in the Compaſs; but I cannot but ſay, he ſeemith to be moſt* Simply Faithful, *in fuſilling his Miniſtry, propoſing himſelf a pattern, and perſwading his friends and people to walk in the* Exactneſs of Truth *againſt all Extreams; though his worldly and carnal Intereſt lieth on either hand, and might eaſily induce him to advance, or at leaſt by his ſilence to abett the ſame. I cannot but obſerve this is not the firſt time* Mr. Crofton *hath divided from the Policies of them who could not diſown his Principles, or Scripturally determine againſt his Practice: And truly I wiſh men may conſider, whether the* Serpent *do not out-ſtretch and over-reach the* Dove, *in thoſe Policies which make* Religion (*unto its reproach*) *a matter of Faction, and ſtudy to ſave, and recover* Reformation, *by the appearance of a Bulky Party, for* Separation? *I cannot but let thee know, I am thus far clear of* Mr. Crofton's *mind,* Unwarrantable Non-communion *may not be allowed, no not for a day, though to ſaving Reformation; for we may not do Evil, that Good may come thereof; and I cannot be perſwaded, I am disbanded from Chriſts Army, ſo ſoon as I am ſuperſeded to my Conduct; I muſt march under his Banner, when I may not be permitted to march at the Head of a Company: And ſure I am, it is more eaſie to fall into either*

ther Extream, than to walk between both uprightly, according to the Truth of the Gospel.

Reader, *I will stay thee no longer, only know, That* this Season of Publication *of this* LETTER, *is by me chosen, or rather constrained by the over-prudent* Supersedeas *before mentioned, and* silence *our* over-general Cautions *of our pious Ministers in this Case, and houre of* Temptation *which is come upon us.*

If any Minister *be hereby provoked to beat out the Truth, which must guide the Churches Practice: If any* Christian *do hereby receive Direction to dispel his Doubts, and steer his Conversation: Or if any* rashly censorious Saint *be hereby convinced of their uncharitable, unchristian Censures, and bitter words; by which they have wounded themselves, and grieved him whom God hath smitten, be hereby convinced of their fault, so as to give Glory to God, and with* Jobs *Comforters, confess their Guilts, I have obtained mine End, and hope it shall not much displease my Pastor, on whom, I confess, I have herein too much presumed.*

H

I am thine in Union with the Church,

Sept. 1. 1662.

And Simplicity of the Gospel.

R. S.

REFOR-

REFORMATION no SEPARATION:

OR,

Zachary Crofton's Plea for Communion with the Church of *England.*

In a Letter to a Christian Friend.

Christian Friend,

CONsidering we live in an Age exceeding scrupulous, and the actions of a Prisoner are subject to Observation and Censure, without the least enquiry into the reasons, end and inducements thereof: And well knowing my unhappy self to be a man much mistaken and misrepresented; obnoxious to, and afflicted with the groundless calumnies of the wicked, and censures of the weak: And being deeply sensible of the sad doom denounced against such as administer *Offence to any of Christs little ones*; and the great damage and danger of a groundless offence, choaking the joy, and curbing the duty of such as take it. I (who have Mat 18.6.

for more then six moneths been buried alive) do conceive a duty and necessity incumbent upon me, to appear, and (by such utensils as a close and severe imprisonment will afford) to speak for my self, in the cause of God and his Church (charged on my weak hands) in reference to an act, which Conscience doth constrain me to pursue; and (or obtained liberty) to attend. In which I discern some ready to insult, whilest others soon scandalized, beyond what the nature thereof may occasion, to the one or the other; for God (whom I serve in the Spirit) is my witness, I would give no offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Greek, nor to the Church of God.

The case is this:

SIr *John Robinson*, the Lieutenant of the Tower, did of his own accord (not at that time, though often before, moved to it by or from me) on *Fryday* the thirteenth instant, send me word by my Keeper, *That I should have liberty to go to Church, and enjoy the Solemn Assembly, and Publique Worship of God, celebrated within this place* (the which on second thoughts he hath remanded;) in the use hereof, I must of necessity attend that Order of Administration, against which I have publiquely witnessed, as that which is *Corrupt and Superstitious*; yet Conscience of duty doth compel me to receive and use this liberty (when I can obtain it) as a mercy from God, and favour from men, the which I have often prayed for and desired. Hereupon I apprehend a clamour is sent abroad, that *Mr. Crofton is present at, and attends unto the reading of the Service-Book*; in which some *boast* beyond measure, as having gained a Proselyte; whilest others *stumble*, as if I started from the truth and work of Reformation, and testimony which (through Gods grace) I have given thereunto.

My good Friend, you must know, this clamour is (*as to the fact*) as yet false, the liberty being not yet obtained, but

but I confined to my *Solitary Sabbaths*, ; wherein I hope, I can profeſs, *I am not alone*, becauſe the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is with me: But indeed I muſt confeſs it true in (the *fieri*) my deſire, intention and endeavour to procure this liberty, ſo ſoon as I can, and my reſolution to attend thoſe corrupt Adminiſtrations, and this diſorderly ſervice of God, until God pleaſe to bring me forth, and make me drink the waters of his Sanctuary in purer Veſſels; and I cannot but proteſt, that the one or the other, inſulting, or offended at my ſo doing, may grieve me, and wound their own ſouls, but cannot ſay they know me, who was ever ſatisfied (and ſo declared my ſelf in my publique Miniſtery) as to this point; or that I adminiſter any cauſe for ſuch inſultation or offence: Yet to the end Gods diſhonor, Religions diſgrace, their own danger by this their ſin, may (if poſſible) be prevented, I thought it my duty to ſignifie to you, and require you (as you have opportunity) to communicate to others, theſe following conſiderations, as Apologetical reaſons, for what I am convinced, is not onely lawful, but a poſitive duty, not without ſin to be omitted, though the critiſim of our times, and my ſpecial caſe, may require an Apology for the ſame.

My long, cloſe, and ſevere durance (much beyond any other Priſoner in this place) *or any carnal, ſelf, politique Principle*, hath not been *the impulſive cauſe* of my deſire, or uſe of this liberty; but (as in my other acts, ſubjected to the cenſure of men) *pure conſcience of duty* towards God and my own ſoul, and the *preponderate dictates of my judgement* (I hope in ſome meaſure alſo to diſcern duty in difficult times and conditions) in ſenſe whereof, *I deſired this liberty the firſt day I was committed to this place*, and many times ſince; and have often complained of it to God, and ſuch men as came near me, as a defect in the Government of this His Majeſties chiefeſt Priſon in *England*, that care is not taken, nor liberty allowed, for

Conſid. 1. Deliberate thoughts, not diſtreſs of condition provoke it.

Christian Prisoners to attend upon the publique Worship, and preaching of the Word of God: I have in this respect often preferred the *Compters*, or *Newgate* (more base and despicable in vulgar account) before the Tower of *London*. It cannot I think be soberly (I am sure not charitably) denied, that Christian Prisoners, ought to have Christian liberty and accommodation, in a Christian Kingdom. It is supposed, a Prisoner bringeth with him into this place, some *horrid crime, and notorious guilt*, by reason whereof there is conceived but little between the Prison and death; therefore the hand of Justice which punisheth the offence, ought in Christian pity to seek the salvation of the soul, and (if possible) prevent the Malefactor from dying in, if he must dye for his sin. I have often thought, that if the Heathen indulged *Paul* a liberty to *Preach in Prison*, Christians might and ought much more allow a *Preacher* liberty to *hear* the Word preached in Prison. I hope it will be no offence to minde this Age, that amongst other evils reflected (by such as rose up against him) on the Government of King *Charls* the first, his late Majestie of honorable memory, this was one, and not the least, *Men were detained close Prisoners, without the liberty of using Books, pen, ink, or paper, denying them all the comforts of life, not permitting their wives to come to them; and for the compleating of that cruelty, depriving them of the necessary means of Spiritual consolation, not suffering them to go abroad, to enjoy Gods Ordinances in Gods House, or Gods Ministers to come to them, to administer comfort to them in their Chambers.* Let none therefore dare to censure this act as the result of a distressed condition, or base compliance by constraint of Prison, against the perswasions of Conscience.

Exact Collections, p. 6.

Consid. 2: Solemn publique Worship positive duty.

Communion with the Church visible, in all acts of solemn publique Worship, is an essential part of the Sanctification of the Sabbath, or Lords day, and positive, indispensable duty of every particular soul called by the name of God; to be onely

Superseded

Superſeded by a real, inevitable neceſſity, with aſſurance to any, that *God will have mercy, and not Sacrifice.* This cannot be denyed by any, who obſerve God hath denominated the Sabbath an *holy Convocation.* Synagogues were on this ground erected and frequented, in all the Cities of *Judah*; that the Lord Chriſt, *fulfilling all righteouſneſs*, and his Apoſtles *in conſcience of duty*, made it their cuſtom to go to the Synagogue every Sabbath day; that the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, from the very Aſcenſion of Chriſt, held ſolemn Aſſemblies *on the Lords day*, the firſt day of the Week, and charged the Saints of their age, and in them all others, *not to forſake the Aſſembling of themſelves together*, taxing the defect of ſome therein, *as the manner of ſome is.*

Levit. 23. Luke 4 16. Acts 13 13, 14. & 17. 2. John 20. 19, 26. 1 Cor. 16. 2. Heb. 10. 25.

As *Solitary Sabbaths* are in themſelves, ſo (God knoweth) they have been, and are to me, the ſting of an impriſoned condition: I hope I can ſay, without vanity, as *David* in his exile, *As the Hart panteth for the water Brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God: My ſoul thirſteth for the living God; When ſhall I come and appear before God? when I remember theſe things, I pour out my ſoul in me, for I have gone with the multitude: I went with them to the Houſe of God, with the voyce of joy and gladneſs, with the multitude that kept the holy day.* I deny not God to be ſerved, and enjoyed in *Solitary Worſhip*, but muſt needs obſerve, in *Zion* the Saints paſs *from ſtrenth to ſtrength, every one appearing before God. Solemn publique Worſhip* is Gods chief Ordinance, for the ſupport of his peoples faith; this is denominated, the *Beauty of Gods Holineſs:* To this his preſence and power is promiſed, and in it chiefly predicated; attendance on this, is charged as his peoples duty, and diſcharged as their joy: The want of this is the *Sacra fames*, Spiritual famine, under want of which *Davids* faith was ready to faint, had it not been prevented by a ſpeedy and ſeaſonable ſupply: *When I ſought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the Sanctuary, then underſtood I their end,*

Pſa 42. 1, 2, 3. Pſal. 84. 7. Pſal. 27. 4. & 96. 9. and 110. 3. Amos 8 11. Pſal. 73. 16, 17.

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This therefore is not to be ſlighted, or neglected, or ſuperficially deſired, or uſed; but moſt highly prized, earneſtly deſired, and joyfully imbraced, and not voluntarily declined on every light occaſion, and trivial exception, or friendly perſwaſion; but the grounds muſt be plain, clear, certain, and weighty, ſuch as I may with confidence plead unto my God, as the apology of my abſence of choice, not conſtraint, in which I expect God ſhould *have mercy on me*, becauſe and for that he cannot have *Sacrifice from me*, which can be nothing but the *reſtraining neceſſity* of my condition, or my *running into ſin* to poſſeſs it.

My good Friend, you ſee my caſe is hard; and what now is my caſe, may ere long be yours, and others of Gods people: You yet enjoy a liberty of worſhipping God, in due and right order, and may drink the Waters of the Sanctuary in clean Veſſels; long may you enjoy it, and if God take pleaſure in me, he will in due time reſtore me to it; but if not, let him do what ſeemeth him good At the preſent I have no choice; if I will attend Gods *publique Solemn Worſhip*, I muſt do it in this place, and order, or not at all; whileſt I dread to give the leaſt occaſion of inſultation to the wicked, or offence to the weak, my conſcience is under the apprehenſion and aw of a poſitive indiſpenſible duty, which I dare not decline, unleſs on reaſons conſtituting a clear and unavoidable neceſſity: my preſent reſtraint doth indeed acquit me, and carry the guilt (of my abſence from Gods House) from off me to others, I duly endeavouring, by all juſt means, to have the ſame removed; which once effected, what moral bar will lie upon my minde, and in my way, as a *formal ſin*, which I cannot without guilt break thorow? that is the queſtion I have deſired ſeriouſly to conſult, and by Scripture to reſolve: And on mature thoughts I muſt profeſs I finde not any, which will bear weigh in the ballance of the Sanctuary, as that which I ſhall dare to produce

produce before the Lord, when demanded a reaſon of my voluntary abſence; on which he may not pronounce, *He was bidden to the feaſt, but would not come, and therefore is not worthy, and hereafter ſhall not*: For I muſt profeſs;

1. The Church of *England* a true Church and I a member.

First, I never did, could, or yet can deny, *the being of the Church of England* (that is, the community of Chriſtians in this Nation, incorporated by Baptiſm, profeſſing the true God and Jeſus Chriſt, and ſubjected to the Word and Sacraments, in the Miniſtery of Chriſts lawful Miniſters (for I never believed any *National Priviledge*, ſuch as was peculiar to the Jews, or the *Hierarchical Order*, and collective Conſtitution (which cannot be denied to be a meer humane and ſeparable adjunct, and is neither an equal, nor regular Repreſentation) could or did give that appellation) nor diſown *my own relation to it*; and muſt therefore ſee ſome good ground for my non-communion with it, and for my choice of *Solitary Worſhip of God*, rather then fellowſhip in its *Solemn publique Worſhip*, where and whileſt God affords his preſence, though with a grieved, ſtriving ſpirit, I dare not be abſent, though thereby I might avoid ſome burthen.

It is well known, I am not unacquainted with *the Church-renouncing, rending, ruining principles* of the *Anabaptiſts*, and old ſeparating *Brownifts*, nor with the *Paganizing practice* of the (ſeemingly more ſober and ſerious) *Independent*, or Congregationaliſt; who ſometimes indeed pretend to own the *being of this Church*, but (by their Church-gathering, *Self-Conſtitution*, diſpencing Ordinances by their *ſelf-conſecration*; profeſſed principle, that in *England* there is *much matter for, but not the form of a Church*, and ſo no Church at all, for *forma dat eſſentiam*; and with the height of confidence (to ſay no more of it) proclaiming themſelves *the gathered Churches*, contradiſtinct to the Nation, and all Chriſtians in it (as if they onely were the firſt fruits of *Achaia*, I mean *England*, an infi-

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del Nation, who had never received the Goſpel, or Chriſt had not been preached among them, and profeſſed by them, nor any of her Inhabitants had been incorporated by Baptiſm, into Chriſts Catholique Body, but were to this day *aliens and ſtrangers to the Houſhold of Faith, and Commonwealth of Iſrael*) do plainly declare ſo to all rational men (able and willing to diſcern) that the *being of a Church in* England is by them diſputed, yea, denied: But theſe I never did, nor could approve, and therefore I muſt preſume, none that ever knew me, and my conſtant conteſts, by preaching, writing, and ſuffering under and againſt them, can conceive this to be now any ſcruple to my conſcience, doubt to my ſoul, demur to my duty, or diverſion to my Communion with them, whoſe being a Church of Chriſt, I have ever, and openly aſſerted and defended, and to whom I have ever profeſſed my own relation.

Prophane members deſtroy not the Church.

That theſe men urge, *That many members in the Church of* England, *are rude and prophane in their Converſation, with their mouthes confeſſing, but in works denying God, and are not therefore fit matter for a Church*, I do well know, and to my grief and ſhame do know to be true, and viſible, but to my comfort do know to be an Objection of no weight; for our queſtion is, concerning *Communion* with, not the *Conſtitution* of a Church: That ſuch matter ſhould not at firſt Conſtitution have been taken in, and having grown up, ought to have been cut off, and caſt out, I can and do yield, and conſent; but that the *diſorder, defection and prophaneneſs of the members*, or what is more, the *Angels and Miniſters*, hath reſolved the Church into a *non-entity*, and neceſſitated *non-communion*, (ſave in a new Conſtitution and Church gathering) I cannot believe, becauſe I finde nothing more plainer in *Nature*, then for a *degenerate Vine*, to retain the name and nature of *a Vine*, when it bringeth forth little ſave ſowre Grapes; nor is any thing more clearer in Scripture, then

Mat. 3. 9.

then for the *children of the Devil*, to have *Abraham to their father*, and be the *children of God*, *and Covenant of Grace*, by visible administration: or for *disorderly Christians in Corinth*, to be called, and owned as *Saints* and *Believers*, a man covetous, a fornicator, and adulterer, an idolater, a drunkard, to be called a *brother*; *Sardis* having *a name to live, but being dead*, is declared one of the *golden Candlesticks*, among which Christ walketh; and when *Paul* wrote to *Titus*, the Christians in *Crete* were *abominable, disobedient*, and to *every good work reprobate*, Titus 1, 13, 16. yet was *Titus* charged to *rebuke them sharply*, not to disown them, or decline communion with them, or to gather the *fit matter*, and *orderly Christians* among them into a *new Church form*; nor are any among them advised, or directed so to do; a Ram, and a Goat cannot be denied to be of Christs flock on earth, though they may be turned on his left hand, at the day of judgment; Correction, and casting out is the priviledge of a Church member; and supposeth its capacity in their object, though an *incestuous person*: the prophaneness of the members of this Church may and must provoke my *brotherly admonition*, ministerial reprehension, and the *Churches Censures* against them, but will never warrant my *non-communion with them*, or voluntary absence from Gods solemn publick worship celebrated among them; because it doth not *ipso facto*, by any due *order*, or *divine direction*; discharge their relation to Christs Catholick visible body, so long as God knoweth them as his *Spouse*, and *people*, (though deserving) having not received from him a Bill of Divorce; I may be burdened to see their lewdness and lightness, but must not forsake the Bride-chamber, nor his worship therein celebrated: without all doubt, the capacity of those *within the Church* (though *disorderly*, and as such to be judged) is vastly different from Turks, Jews, and Pagans, and those *without the Church*; who refuse to professe the true God, and Christ, or obedience to them; the one being subjected to Gods *special pastoral, paternal care*; in the case of their very disorder and aberrations; whilest

Matth 3 9. John 8 44.

1 Cor. 5. 11. Rev. 3. 1.

the other only enjoy Gods *common providence* as do other creatures, the works of his hands.

Parochial distribution convenient and good.

What hath been urged to nullifie this Church from (what this kind of men will needs suppose to be) the form thereof, *viz.* that they are by *Parochial constitution*, and *Christ never ordained Parishes*, hath been often, and abundantly answered, by many, and among others, I have already fully spoken to it in my *Bethshemish clouded*, and shall therefore now only say, *Parochial distribution* is no *constitution*, nor any *essential form of the Church*; so as that bare simple habitation within such bounds, should *ipso facto*, without further capacity, or qualification make men *Church members*; or their removal, or non-residence within this or that Parish, (as do Merchants and Mariners) should discharge their relation to the Church: but it is a *Political order*, and *convenient distribution of the Church Catholick visible*; to *particular Assemblies*; for the due and more easie Celebration of Gods publick worship; the Lord Jesus founded his Church Catholick, and universal, into which Baptism is the Ordinance of Catholick incision, and imitation; and excommunication is the Ordinance of Catholick excision, and discharge; but nature, and the necessity of order doth divide it into particular Assemblies, according to humane discretion: and no order can more conveniently circumscribe particular societies of the Church, than *vicinity*, and *cohabitation*; This the holy Ghost doth plainly digitate, by denominating the first plants of Christianity, by the *places* where they were planted, not by the first *planters*, or *after Pastors*: blaming it as a *Schism in the Church*, to say, *I am of Paul*, *I of Apollo*, and *I of Cephas*; and indeed this distribution doth much facilitate the inspection of the Pastor, or brethren, beyond what the *Covenant constitution* of Congregationalists is capable of; whereby some living in *York* are members of a Church in *London*. Parochial Division then being the benefit of the Church, and members thereof in Christian Cities, Countries, and Nations, it is so far from blame and avoidance, that it is to be commended,

Rome, *Corinth*, *Galatia*, *Ephesus*, and the like.

mended, and approved by men of prudence, and order, and can never neceſſitate, or warrant any mans non-communion with the Chriſtian Aſſemblies thus diſtribnted, and conveniently aſſembled.

Unto ſuch as ſtumble themſelves, and would have others ſo to do, at Communion with the Church of *England*, becauſe they do not know that it was *rightly gathered, and conſtituted at the firſt*; I ſhall briefly ſay, Hiſtory, (the beſt evidence of an ancient Act,) doth aſſure us that the *Goſpel was firſt preached*, and *Chriſtianity was firſt planted in our Iſlands by the Apoſtles, or Apoſtolical men*, which (no doubt) did with all care, rightly lay here the right foundation of Gods Church, and if we may (as in caſes of this nature, we muſt) judge (a poſteriori) the *certainty of the root*, by the extent, and quality of the branches; the *foundation* by the Dimentions and duration of the Fabrick; can any man reading the *Engliſh* Stories of the eminent Martyrs of Chriſtianity found in this Church, in all ages, ſince the times of the Apoſtles unto this day, and not conclude the Church was at firſt rightly planted, and founded? theſe men ſhall do well to reſolve the old queſtion ever put by the Non-conformiſts to the Browniſts (theſe mens progenitors) if they be begotten to God, in what Church, and by what Ordinances were they converted? was it not the Church of *England*? we (whom they to ſerve their deſigne, will own as Saints, and declare fit matter for a Church,) muſt profeſſe our ſelves ſprouts from this plant; their Charity is not ſure ſo irrational, as to believe men may gather *Grapes of Thorns*, or *Figgs of Thiſtles*, for if ſo, their gathering Churches will be found needleſſe, whileſt Saints grow in *Infidel ſoils*, and Gods houſe exiſteth without the laying any *foundation*.

Englands Church was rightly conſtituted at the firſt.

Theſe men ſhall do well to conſider, whether the knowledge of the mode and order of firſt planting and gathering the Church, be neceſſary to every member related to it. In *England* we finde ſocieties profeſſing the true God, and Chriſt; baptized into his name, worſhipping him

Knowledge of a Church its firſt conſtitution not neceſſary.

by his own Ordinances; this is the *forme of a Church*; and doth suppose and imply a *Root* and *Foundation*, by which it is animated and preserved; But must we needs know how it was at the first laid, or planted? though by length of time it is worn out of sight, and over-grown with earth and weeds? are we bound to renounce the *Vine*, and run out of the *house*, unless we pluck up the *root*, and raze the foundation to satisfie our selves herein? if so, God help the illiterate souls, and weak capacities not capable to conceive, or well understand the same; is Christs Church planted for an age only? that every succeeding generation must transplant? gathering of Churches did indeed begin the *Acts of the Apostles*; must it needs be continued to the end of the *Revelation?* to the coming of the Lord to judgment? I finde not *Paul* in his *joyning himself* to the Church, nor *Priscilla* and *Aquila* in their travels, and communion with different Churches, make any demurre on this enquiry; and I dare not think the holy Ghost would have concealed from us a point of so great importance.

My good friend; upon the whole of this Objection, I must let you know that my serious and deliberate thoughts do dissent from the Conclusions concerning the *matter and form of a Church*, stated by the *self-consecrated Officers of the hundred and twenty self-constituted gathered Churches*, which of late years met at the *Savoy:* but assent unto the determination of Mr. *Cotton* in his advice to the brethren of old *England* at the close of his way of the Churches in *New-England*, (viz.) *The work is not to make them Churches, which were none before*; (*for the Gospel having been preached in* England *by Apostles, or Apostolical men, they were without doubt rightly planted*) *but to reduce them to the Primitive purity they had in their first constitution.*

And (here my friend,) I must desire the Independents will not be offended, that I propose them as the present prime promoters of the *nonentity of the Church of England*, by way of barre to *Communion with her*, and a principle of

separa-

ſeparation from her: for that (notwithſtanding their contrary profeſſions of what they cannot ſoberly, charitably, and rationally deny) their common ſuggeſtion in *England*, is *fit matter, but not the form*, (which is the eſſe) of the Church; their *Savoy concluſions*, and paganizing *Church-gathering practice*, do loudly proclaim them the off-ſpring of the *Browniſts*, and poſterity of the rigid *Separatiſts*, ever withſtood by the ſober, and ſerious Non-Conformiſts, ſince *Englands* Reformation: and in this point the *ſummum genus*, of thoſe ſeveral, ſpecifical, ſelf-conſtituted Sects, which have confounded our Church; the odium of whoſe Schiſm from it, defended by Rebellion, Schiſm, and horrid Treaſon is at this day moſt ſadly (though falſly) reflected on the moſt loyal, ſober, ſerious, reforming, non-conforming Presbyterians; to the weakning their hands, and retarding, yea diverting their progreſſe in an humble, argumentative, and patient purſuit of Chriſts Ordinances, and due authority of Chriſts Officers, to be reſtored, and exerciſed in the Church of *England*; by me ever owned, and now lamented, but not to be deſerted.

Such as fancie the Church of *England* was *loſt in the deluge of Popery and Antichriſtianiſm*, may by their own obſervation correct the ſame; and be conſtrained to confeſſe, there is in this reſpect no more cauſe of ſtumble as to the *entity of this Church*, then was as to the *being of the Jews*, when overſpread with Idolatry, in their many defections from God; for in *Englands* worſt times they may finde a perſecuted *Elias*, a *John Wickliffe*, with many other moſt eminent branches, bringing forth the Cluſters of Goſpel Grapes, to the bleeding out their very lives, beſides *Obadiah's fifties* hidden in Caves, by the violence of perſecution; certainly the *Root muſt abide*, or how, or whence could theſe branches ſpring? Yea, the winter ſtorms of Popery paſſing away, and the floods of Antichriſtianiſm aſſwaging, though not dryed up, and the chief weeds of ſuperſtition being plucked up, though ſome remain; how hath this

Englands Church loſt not its being in Popery.

this Church revived, flouriſhed, and ſent out many moſt eminent and pious branches, without any new plantation? Yea, conveyed unto themſelves (who queſtion her being) the *truth of Grace*, and Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, if ever they receiv'd it? I bleſſe God I have learned to diſcern between the *ſubject*, and its *ſeparable adjuncts* though never ſo vile, and do believe the *Church* to be *Chriſts Church*, though vitiated and defiled with *Idolatrous adminiſtrations*; all, nor indeed any defection is an actual divorce; if *adulterous Judah*, on a ſummons to repentance, do return, and put away her abominations, ſhe loſeth not her relation to God; nor doth the high places continued under his reformation, make God or his people to forſake her; the *Temple of God* abides his, when given to be trodden under the feet of the Gentiles: yea, when the Antichriſt the man of ſin, ſitteth therein; this notion may poſſibly ſound better to ſome eares from *New-England*, than from the Tower of *London*; let it therefore be thence receiv'd; *If Antichriſt muſt ſit in the Temple of God, and the Courts of the Temple be given to the Antichriſtian Gentiles for a certain time to tread under foot, then there was a true Church ſtate where he ſate, and whileſt he ſate there, and it was the true meaſured Temple, whoſe Courts he did tread under foot, nor can there be Antichriſt, unleſſe there be the Temple of God and Courts thereof, where he is; and if ever Antichriſt ſate in* England, *then there was the Temple of God there; before he ſate in it, and whileſt he ſate in it, as was alſo in other reformed Churches, the Temple or Church is the ſubject wherein he muſt ſit; the Antichriſtian ſeat is not the ſubject, nor conſtituteth it, but is an accident vitiating the ſubject, and ſeparable from it; the removing therefore of Antichriſtianity, doth not deſtroy the ſubject, or make it ceaſe to be; but changeth it into the better ſtate, in which it was before thus accidentally vitiated:* this is the aſſertion of Mr. *Phillips* of *Water-town* in *New England*.

Jer. 3.

England was Chriſts Church before the *Antichriſtian deluge*,

delage, under the power of Popery; and ſince it was purged out, and ſo ſhe at this day (notwithſtanding her backſliding) doth abide; God provoked hath not yet removed his Candleſtick, or given her a bill of divorce, as he juſtly may, and I fear yet will, if I then deny Communion with ſuch of her aſſemblies, I have a liberty to attend and frequent, and make my appeal to God on the account of her *non-entity*; with a Lord ſhe was not, or I know her not to be the Church and Spouſe, my heart would condemn me in the guilt of a *notorious lye*, *groundleſſe*, *and uncharitable Cenſure*, and ſo make my *wilful ſolitary devotion*, exceeding ſad, becauſe exceeding ſinful.

2. *Englands* corruptions notſufficient bar to Communion.

Secondly, I hitherto could not, nor yet can, conceive the corruptions of the Church of *England* to be a ſufficient ground, or warrantable barre to my *non-Communion* with her ſolemn aſſemblies in her publick worſhip.

Separation from the world and *Babylon* allowed.

I do not ſay that *Separation in all Caſes is unlawful*, I well know Chriſtians are *called out of*, and *ſeparated from the world*, in their firſt acceſſion to the Church of Chriſt; but this is not our Caſe, who (do as is before noted) own the Church of *England* as reſolved into that capacity: I know alſo *ſeparation from Babylon* the ſeat of Antichriſt is a duty, directed and charged by the Lord, on all his people; and unto this alſo the Church of *England* doth profeſſe, and cannot be denied to have attained, and therefore ſtands diſtinct from the one, under the Epithite (*Reformed*) as well as from the other by the Appellation (*Church*): ſo as that I dare not deeme *England* the *world*, or *Babylon*, (thoſe objects of a ſerious, ſacred ſeparation, and non-communion) to both which ſhe is found contradiſtinct.

Englands corruptions paralleld with *Iſraels* and others.

That there are in the Church of *England* (eſpecially in her preſent relapſed eſtate) *many and groſſe corruptions*, *grievous to the Spirit of God and his people*, calling for the zealous admonitions, and moſt faithful rebukes of his Miniſters; is alas! too too legible, and apparent, to be denied by any; yet, (when I conſult the Scriptures) I cannot but finde:

finde as great (yea if possible) greater corruptions in those whom God, and his people owned as his *Church*, and *Spouse*; and yet *separation*, or *voluntary non-communion*, was never practised, advised, or indulged, but the contrary thereunto.

Prophaneneſſe of Miniſters &miniſtration.

Will any object unto us the *prophaneneſſe of the Miniſters*, *rudeneſſe and diſorder of the miniſtration of Gods worſhip*, we yeild it is too visibly true; but more vile administrators, or irregular administrations cannot be, than were the *ſons of Eli* in their service; who made the people to *loath the offerings of the Lord*, and were rebuked, and described by *Samuel*, in 1 *Sam.* 2. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Now the ſons of Eli were ſons of Belial, they knew not the Lord, and the Prieſts cuſtome with the people was this, when any man offered Sacrifice, the Prieſts ſervant came while the fleſh was in ſeething, with a fleſh-hook in his hand, and he ſtruck it into the pan, or kettle, or Caldron, or pot; all that the fleſh-hook brought up, the Prieſt took for himſelf, ſo they did in Shilo unto all the Iſraelites that came thither, alſo before they burned the fat, the Prieſts ſervant came and ſaid to the man that ſacrificed, give me fleſh for to roſt for the Prieſt, for he will not have ſodden fleſh of thee, but raw; and if any man ſaid unto them, let them not faile to burn the fat preſently, and then take as much as thy ſoul deſireth, then he would anſwer him, nay, but thou ſhalt give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force wherefore* (by this horrid diſorder defended by violence) *the ſin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord*, and in *verſe* 22. it is reported that *Eli's* ſons *lay with the women that aſſembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*: O horrid uncleanneſſe, moſt heaven-daring villany! yet I find not that any God-fearing-Iſraelite *forſook the Sanctuary*, or durſt *forbear their Sacrifice*; nor did *Samuel* (who reproved, and denounced Gods judgment againſt this prophaneneſſe) ever adviſe, or direct the ſame: the Scribes and Phariſees in the dayes of our Saviour, *ſaid, but did not; laid heavie burdens*

dens on the people, which themselves would not touch with one of their fingers; they under pretence of long prayers, devoured widows houses, they would neither enter into heaven themselves, nor suffer such as would; yet the *Lord himself* who reproved them, *heard them*, and charged his Disciples to *hear them, because they sate in Moses seat*; Let it be observed and remembred, the *Authority* may, but the *quality* of the Minister doth not adde to, or abstract from the entity, or efficacy of Gods Ordinances, he may preach to my salvation, who is himself a castaway. Matth. 23. 1 Cor. 9. 27.

Do any object the *preaching false doctrine*; *publick reading the Apocripha* as part of Gods Word; *innovations in worship, polluting Gods Ordinances*, or *injustice in discipline*; I shall neither deny, nor excuse the same: only say as the Apostle *Peter* to the Church in his dayes, *there were false Prophets among the people, even as there are false Teachers among you*; the true Prophets of God in *Israel*, were ordinarily confronted by the false; there wanted not an *Hannaniah*, to break the Yokes of *Jeremiah*; nor a proud *Pashur* to put him in the Stocks, in the Gate of *Benjamin*, when he *only declared Gods mind, warned of Gods approaching judgments*, and withstood the *perjurious breach of the Oath of God*, which was upon the *King, and Kingdom*; nor is any thing more plain, than *Israels* setting their *posts, by Gods posts*; their *Altars by Gods Altars*; setting up in Gods house the very *Image of Jealousie*, insomuch that Gods Prophets were ordinarily *invective*; and *vehemently reproving* in their Ministery; and indeed extraordinarily raised up to that very end! yet we find (not in all their Cals to Repentance) one *Caution* against *Communion with the Church*, or *Call unto Separation*: In the dayes of our Saviour, the *Jews* were so corrupt in their doctrine, that he Cautioned his Disciples to *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*, they *made the Word of God of none effect, by their traditions of the Elders*; they enervated the Law by most strait and false interpretations thereof; In *worship* they innovated, and with great severity imposed, their own *Inven-*

Corruption in Doctrine and Worship. 2 Pet. 2. 1. Ezek. 8. 6. 43. 8. Mark 8. 15. 7. 3.

tions, Phariſaical *Rites*, and *Superſtitions*: they prophaned the *Temple*, and made Gods houſe a *Den of Thieves*; and in their Diſcipline they made acts of *Neceſſity*, *Charity* and *piety*, cenſurable unto a *caſting out of the Synagogues*; againſt all which the whole Miniſtery of the Lord Jeſus was *highly invective*, and *ſeverely rebuking*; yet he neither *diſowned* them as a *Church*, *denyed communion with them*, all his time on earth; or *directed* any of his *Diſciples ſo to do*, ſo long as God continued his preſence and Ordinances to and among them: but on the contrary pleaded for them (as the very fountain of Salvation) in oppoſition to the *Samaritans*, *You worſhip you know not what*, *but we know what we worſhip*, *for ſalvation is of the Jews*: he ſent his cleanſed Lepers to ſhew themſelves to the Prieſts, and offer according to the Law of *Moſes*; confined his Miniſtry and Apoſtles to them, till after the vaile of the Temple was rent, in token of the expiration of their worſhip and departure of God; accounting them children, and all others dogs; and charged the Diſciples to hear them who ſate in *Moſes* ſeat; under all their God-provoking Church annihilating corruptions, he neither practiſed or preſcribed a *non-communion* or *ſeparation*; And in all extreams, I deſire to make him my pattern, and *walk as he walked*, who never went aſtray.

John 4. 22.

1 John 2. 6.

Do any ſtumble at the *prophaneneſſe of the members*, and the *neglect of corrective diſcipline*, *rudeneſſe and irreverence in the uſe of Gods Ordinances*, *confuſed method*, and the *diſorder of popular acclamations in publick prayer*, *and other acts of worſhip*; I wiſh I could ſay theſe ſtones lay not in their way, or that they were in my power to remove them; but I think they run on a much greater Rock, who *run out of Gods Church*, or *from ſolemn publick worſhip* becauſe thereof: for the Church at *Corinth* was greatly corrupt, and provoked the ſeverity of Apoſtolical reprehenſion; and that once and again; there being amongſt them *inceſt not to be named among the Gentiles*, and an *heaven-daring oſtentation in it*, inſtead of correction of it; a *participation with the table of Divels*, by their attendance on the Idol-

Prophaneſs of members, and diſorder in Miniſtration.

1 Cor. 5. 1, 2. 10. 21. 11. 20. 21. 14. 26. 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21

Idol-feasts of the Infidels; *a rude and deboist drunken Communion at the Lords Supper*, intermingled and confounded with the Love-feasts: *intollerable disorder in their publick Assemblie*, all speaking *at one and the same moment*, *their very women not keeping silence*; and that in *different matters* and *tongues*, every one had *his Psalm*, *his Prayer*, *his Revelation*, *his Propheſie*, *his gift of Tongues*, (in all which reſpects they were more confuſed than our popular acclamations) and conſtrained the Apoſtles to check them, by the nature of God, as a *God of order*, *and not of confuſion*; in all theſe the Apoſtle adviſed, and endeavoured with all authority a *Reformation*, but not *ſeparation*, or *non-communion*, nor *tranſplantation* into a new gathered Church; I cannot imagine he would make *Schiſm from the Church*, a ſigne of a *ſpiritual*, who judged *Schiſm in the Church an evidence of a carnal mind*. 1 Cor. 3. 4.

Do men complain (as they have cauſe) that ſome *Roman Rites*, *and order was retained*, *when this Church was reformed*; let them conſider many pious Kings of *Judah*, have their reforming governments ſtained with a *but the high places were not taken away*, but *the people went thither to worſhip*: yet I finde not that any God-fearing Iſraelite, who loathed thoſe Reliques of Idolatry, ever barred themſelves becauſe thereof, from Gods Altar and worſhip. Rom. Rites.

My very ſoul is grieved to conſider *Englands back-ſliding*, *Indulgence of erronious Doctors and doctrines*, *formality and lukewarmneſſe in Religion*; yet when I obſerve that *Epheſus* who *loſt her firſt love*, *Pergamus* indulging the *doctrine of Balaam*, and the *Nicolaitans*, *Thyatira* ſuffering the *woman Jezabel*, *who called her ſelf a propheteſſe to teach*, *and to deceive Gods people*; *Sardis* having *a name to live*, *but being dead*, and *Laodicea*, *Englands* Counterpart, ſo *lukewarm that no good is ſpoken of her*; by all which theſe *Aſian* Churches were ruſted, and therefore reproved by the Lord, yet not rejected; but repreſented to the world as the *Starres* he held in his right hand, and *golden Candleſticks* Backſliding & Lukewarmneſs

among which he walked; I dare not disown her *relation to God*; disclaim *mine own relation to her*, nor voluntarily decline *communion with her.*

Corruptions are not all alike.

My good friend, *all corruptions* in Gods Church and worship, are *displeasing to God, and distastful to his people* imbracing the simplicity of the Gospel; but *all corruptions* are not alike in *operation, quality, and extent*, nor of a like *influence on Gods Church and worship:* consider therefore some corruptions are *substantial, and intrinsecal*, vitiating the *very subject*, and so *universally spread through the worship of God, that it cannot be used without sin*; others are *circumstantial and extrinsecal* to the same, *vain, needlesse appendants*, superadded by mans will, but which notwithstanding Gods Ordinances remain entire, and *exactly his*, and may be used without participation in the affixed corruption.

Corruptions substantial and intrinsecal.

Some corruptions incident to Gods Church and worship, I say are *substantial and intrinsecal*, (not arising out of Gods Ordinance as the genuine product, and effect thereof, but) *entring into the very body of the Church* and *substance of Gods worship*, as a Spider into wine, or venemous Worme into an Apple; so as to *vitiate the subject*, (that it cannot be used with safety) and *nullifie the very Ordinances of God*, that it *altereth their very nature* to the losse of their efficacie, and transmit *certain destruction* to such as sit under the same; yea, which is done either by changing the *matter*, and retaining the *essential constitutive form*, as by a solemne regular *cutting off a Dogs head*, or *offering swines blood*, instead of a *Lamb*, or a *Kid*; a *baptizing* (as some have done) by *fire* instead of *water:* or retaining the *matter*, but changing the *essential forme*, as did *Jeroboam*, and the *Samaritans* worshipping the *true God*, by the *very Sacrifices*, and in the *very order* himself appointed; but before *self-devised Symbols*, *Calves* to the one, and the *Dove* to the other, in a *self-appointed place, Dan and Bersheba* to the one, *Mount Gerizim* to the other; and by *self-consecrated Priests*, the lowest of the people, *and so departing from the Temple in Jerusalem*, Gods *Ark in it*, and the *Tribe of Levi*

Levi: all which were eſſentiall to the form of divine worſhip: and thus did the *Corinthians* eating and drinking at the Idol Sacrifices, which the Apoſtle ſeverely corrected, with a (*ye cannot partake of the Table of the Lord, and the table of Devils, ye cannot drink of the Cup of the Lord, and the cup of Devils*;) and by pointing them unto the eſſential form of the Sacrament, *the Cup of bleſſing, which we bleſſe, is it not the Communion of the blood of Chriſt?* and *the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Chriſt?* Of this nature is Baptiſm, by a *Midwife*, or any other private hand, though with *water*, and *in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt*; or by water and a lawful Miniſter, but in the name of *God the Father of all things, and Truth the Mother of all things*; as I have read ſome have done. 1 Cor. 10. 16.

Corruptions *extrinſecal, and circumſtantial* are Ordinances *ſuperadded unto*, and ſo *concomitant with*, or *converſant about Gods Ordinances*; but *enter not into*, nor do *vitiate their ſubject*: the which (theſe notwithſtanding) doth exiſt in *matter*, and *eſſential form*, perfect and entire; capable of due operation, in their own courſe and nature; as ſtinking fiſh doth nouriſh; or water pudled, or in an unclean veſſel, doth quench the thirſt; and theſe are either ſome matter *ſuperadded*, (not intermingled with, or deſtructive to Gods Ordinances, ſuch as were the *high places, poſts by Gods poſts, threſholds by his threſholds, Altar by his Altar* in *Iſrael*, unto the very *Image of Jealouſie* ſet up in Gods houſe, which yet remained his, and as ſuch was continued, preſerved and acknowledged. The Lord Jeſus found the Temple his *Fathers houſe of Prayer*, though made a *Den of theeves*; and ſuch is our *Croſſe in Baptiſm*, though ſeemingly ſacramental, yet diſtinct from Gods imitating Seal of the Covenant; and ſuch is a *Roman linnen veſture* in miniſtration of Gods worſhip by a lawfull Miniſter; or ſome *corrupt, rude and unſutable miniſterial method and order*, (which is the veſſel, and only inſtrument of conveiance though unclean) *of adminiſtration*: ſuch was the *violent*, Corruptions extrinſecal and circumſtantial.

olent, and unfitting ſnatching of the Prieſts part of the Sacrifice, by the ſons of Eli, the confuſed acclamations of the Church of Corinth, ſpeaking all at once, different matters, in different tongues; and our impoſed method, diſorderly method of publick Prayer, by *Verſicles*, *Reſponds*, *abruptions*, abreviations and *popular acclamations*, with artificial ſinging by boyes, and baſe fellows thereunto appointed: under all which Gods Ordinances abide a *ſubject compleat, truly*, and *formerly exiſtent, and diſtinct from theſe ſuperadded corruptions*; *operative unto ſalvation*; and therefore may not be declined, or diſowned.

Corruptions *intrinſecal*, are indeed ſuch as do not only warrant, but *neceſſitate non-communion*, yea *ſeparation of the higheſt nature*, as a duty indiſpenſable: In ſence hereof all thoſe in *Iſrael who feared God, and ſet their hearts to ſeek the Lord, prayed for*, and (according to divine directions) *departed from Dan, and Berſheba*, forſook the ſolemn Aſſemblies *Jeroboam had conſtituted*, and followed the *Tribe of Levi*, Gods only Miniſters, unto *Jeruſalem*, Gods only place of publick ſolemn worſhip; and our Saviour reſolved the woman of *Samaria* her enquiry concerning the place of worſhip, with a (*ye know not what ye worſhip; for ſalvation is of the Jews*: This is the very ground of the Reformed Churches *departure*, and *non-communion* with *Rome*; who though ſhe be (by original conſtitution) the *Temple of God*, is become the very *ſeat of Antichriſt*, and by the ſame ſo *vitiated* that her Miniſtrations are the *cup of abomination by which ſhe hath made the Nations drunk*, having (by her *interceſſions of, and to Saints*, the *Popes infallibility*, *divine power and properties, and by her expiatory Sacrifices*) diſowned, and nullified (as much as in her lieth) Chriſts mediatory offices: and (by *dividing the elements, deſtroying the ontward ſigne, eſſential to a Sacrament*, and on a fancied *tranſubſtantiation*, turning it into a *Sacrifice for quick and dead*) nullified Chriſts Ordinances: and (by many other intrinſecal evils) poyſoned Gods whole worſhip, and rendred it directly *deſtructive to ſalvation*; and

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is therefore presented to us under the Appellation *Babylon*, in the very abstract; *spiritual Sodom, and Egypt*; and so the object of our *departure*, advised, with (a *lest ye partake of her sins*: which were and are so universally diffused, and hath so farre vitiated the subject, that a guilt will be contracted by meer Communion.

Corruptions extrinsecal may, and must *grieve the spirits of Gods people*; occasion their *loud complaints*, his Ministers most *zealous reproofs*, and the *studious endeavours of all, to prevent and remove them*; because *scandals to the Church, prejudicial* (though not directly destructive, *to salvation*) *dishonourable to Religion, and the God* (whose prerogative it is to prescribe every pin, and the very snuffers to be used in his House,) and is therefore *highly displeasing to God*; provoking him to *rend a Kingdom from the house of David*, to *loath*, and at least to *leave* his *holy place*, and *remove his Candlestick* from such as will not fear him in the *simplicity of his own institutions*; without the vain and needlesse Appendants of their own inventions: But yet these cannot warrant *separation* or *voluntary non-communion*, because the Church abideth related to God as *his Spouse*; his worship and Ordinances remain for matter and essential form *entire*, and *exactly his own*; notwithstanding the concomitancy of some super-added matter; or the unfit ministerial method, and order by which they are dispensed; and Gods presence is to them *continued*, (though with a grieved, striving spirit, threatning his departure) and thereby we are *under a possibility of salvation*; (though engaged to more care and industry) this was the case of the Prophets, our Saviour and his Disciples, the Church of the Jews, and Primitive Christians, under the many parallel (yea transcending to ours,) corruptions, before mentioned, without any prescript, or practice, of Separation, or Non-Communion.

Extrinsecal corruptions warrant no separation.

1 King. 11. 31.

Christian Friend, it is too evident, That *many and great Corruptions are* to our sin, and shame *retained*; and to the aggravation thereof (with an high hand, and defiance of the God of Jealousie) *returned* (after a Solemn and Sacred Expulsion)

The Case of *England* under corruption.

Expulſion) *into our Church*; but yet they are *extrinſecal*, and not of the *ſubſtance of Gods Worſhip*, which for Matter, and eſſential Form, remaineth *entire, and properly his own*: (though not ſo acceptable) *under, as well as without them*; and will not therefore warrant my Separation, or Non-Communion, ſo far as to lie at Home, or loyter in the Church-yard, until the Common-Prayer (whereby God is *truly*, though not *orderly*, invocated, and worſhipped; wherein I (as a Member of that Church) *am intereſted*, and unto which, as it is *Publick Solemn Prayer* (though in an unſuitable Method) my *Amen* is an indiſpenſable Duty) being ended.

The *Adminiſtrations* of Gods Worſhip among us, are indeed *nauſeous*, and *unhealthful*, but not *void*, or *venenous*; our waters are *bitter, and puddled*, but not *poyſonous*; our Paſtures are *trodden down*, and the proud *of the Flock do puſh us with Horn, and with Hoof*; but we are not yet driven out of *Chriſts Fold*, nor dare not we ſay our *Paſture is quite taken from us*: To be plain, Under all our Corruptions, we muſt not, we cannot, we dare not deny the *Matter*, and *eſſential Form of Gods Ordinances and Worſhip, is continued to us*; though ſome ſuperſtitious Rites are unto them annexed, which are apparent Appendants, redundant to, and ſeparable from, and not *vitiating*, deſtructive, or annihilating to their Subject; and are therefore pretended and profeſſed (by the Canons appropriated to this Church) to be *Acts of Order and Ornament*, rather than of *Worſhip, and Adoration to God*; and they are ſuch wherein the people are generally *paſſive*, not *active*. Baptiſm is *fully and formally Gods Ordinance*, though the *Croſs* be needleſly, and ſuperſtitiouſly added thereunto; and the *Parent* (by virtue of whoſe intereſt in Gods Covenant, the Child receiveth the Seal) is unjuſtly excluded; and a deputation of *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, is groundleſly impoſed: *The Word of God is not excluded*, though now and then, a piece of *Apocripha* is unwarrantably read in the publick Aſſembly; nor doth it ceaſe to be the Word of God, becauſe it is *unfitly mangled*

Ezek. 34. 18, 19, 20, 21.

mangled into parts and parcels, *unduly fixed* unto *places*; *unreasonably appropriated* unto *dayes and times*, and *published* in unseemly *vestures and voyces*. I confess their *Common-Prayer is my burden*, by reason of its *defects and disorder*, and the rudeness of the Ministerial Method. I stand convinced, it ought to be altered; yea, abolished, by reason of its Symetry to the *Romish Mass*, superstitious Order, and unsuitableness to Solemn Publick Prayer; yet I must confess, I find in it no *Matter* to which (on a charitable interpretation) a sober serious Christian may not say, nay, can deny his (*Amen*:) And though I distaste the *Ministerial Method*, I cannot disown in it the *essential Form of Prayer*; (viz.) *A calling upon God in the Name of Christ*. That *Set-Forms of Prayer are used*, is an Act and Argument of *weakness*; that they are *imposed on Gods Church* and *Ministers*, is an Act (I cannot acquit) of *wickedness*: And that this defective disorderly Form, is *retained*, yea, by *force returned* into the Church of *England*; I fear will be found an Act and Argument of *wilfulness against Gods mind*; yet neither the *one*, nor the *other*, maketh it cease to be *Publick Solemn Prayer*; nor do I see on what ground I can deny, or refuse my (*Amen*) to what is prayed for, because I know there are many things wanting to the Church, which are not, nor indeed can be by this Form expressed; or not joining desires to God with (and as a Member of) his Church, because they are rudely and unfittingly expressed; whil'st the irregularity of that common Order, is no Bar to Gods acceptance of my more regular (*Amen*) thereunto given.

Surplices and canting quiering, singing boys and men.

See the Epistle to the Liturgical consideratore considered.

Departure from Babylon, is the indispensable *Duty*, and will be the *property* of all, *whose names are written in the Lambs Book of Life*; but the Object must be *Babylon* in the very abstract; *Setting the mark of the Beast on them who partake with her, bearing in her hand the Cup of Abomination*, and so appearing to be *formal spiritual Ægypt and Sodom*: I cannot believe every or any Society retaining some *Babylonish Rites, Vestures*, and *Orders*, with a protest-

Rev. 13. 8, 17, 4, 13, 8.

ed and apparent *receſſion from Babylon*, can be the Object thereof; and the laſt of theſe, is the *capacity of Englands Church*: Certainly the *Temple of the Lord* is not to be diſowned, or renounced, becauſe it hath been ſometime *trodden down by the Antichriſtian Gentiles*, and *vitiated* by the ſeat of the Beaſt; when theſe are expelled, though the dirt of their tramplings, and ſtink of their ſeſſion remain behind them: My good friend, let it be ſeriouſly reſolved, is there no difference between *Iſrael* and *Judah*? *Rome*, and a *reformed Church*? a profeſſed *ſacrificing Prieſt*, and a *Miniſter of the Goſpel*, fondly affecting and retaining that Appellation? between a *calling on the only true God*, *in the name of Chriſt*, though in a defective, rude, confuſed, and unfitting order, and praying unto Saints and dumb Idols? between the *diſorderly adminiſtration of the worſhip*, for matter and form, Gods own appointment, and the *Ordinance nullifying adminiſtration in an unknown tongue*, to which the hearers cannot ſay *Amen*? and *abſtraction*, or *alteration of the Elements* beyond, yea contrary to Gods preſcription, or what the poſſibility of nature, and entity of the ordinance will admit? between *Sacraments* with ſome unwarrantable ſuperſtitious Appendants, and a *Sacrifice expiatory for the quick and dead*? muſt we depart from *Iſrael*, returned from *Egypt* and *Babylon*? though retaining the ſavour, ſome of the Manners and Cuſtoms, and an hankering mind to go back unto thoſe accurſed places? I pray God keep *England* (in her now retrograde motion) from going back to *Rome*, then (through his Grace) I ſhall not dare to renounce her *Communion*, though my ſoul mourn for her *corruption*: for ſo long as we enjoy in her the very *matter*, and *eſſential form of Gods worſhip*, *and Ordinances*, though in an humane, unfit, corrupt miniſterial method and order, with ſome vaine and needleſſe appendants of humane invention; we are not without confidence of Gods *preſence*, and a *poſſibility of ſalvation*; and we therefore are without a ſufficient ground for *ſeparation*, *or non-communion*.

Conſid. 3d. Thirdly, let it be conſidered *Communion with the Church*, under

under many, and great corruptions, is not inconſiſtent with zeal, care, and conteſt for reformation thereof: the *deſigns of Hell* may agree in the end, but diſagree in the means; but it is not ſo with the *determinations of Heaven*; the Devil may ſuggeſt and provoke the correction of *ſin*, by *ſin*; or make *zeal to purity a ſpurre to ſeparation*, and the *ſhipwrack of vertue* to, and *in the Church*; he can make the white Witch *heale*, what the black doth *hurt*; by him one Conjurer doth *bleſſe*, what another doth *curſe*; the *Angel of light* doth often expel, and lay the *Angel of darkneſſe*; but yet they be both *evil Angels*; he ſticks not at, nor ſtirreth againſt *Piety*, or *Religion*, provided it be but *ſinful*; he is content men go in a *via lactea & ſacra*, to the place of woe; and ſteere by Conſcience (if erronious) to their own condemnation: but it is not thus with God, and the dictates of his holy Spirit; all his commands are *competible*; his Graces *concatenated*; All the duties of a Chriſtian are to be diſcharged without *interfering*, *interruption*, or *deſtruction* by one another; he alloweth not one *ſinful ſtep* in the way of ſalvation, though paved with never ſo fair a *pretence of ſanctity*; if therefore his people ſtumble thereinto, they muſt return and go back, if they will go to heaven; no one duty, at any time damps zeal unto another; they may be *deſparata*, but never are *oppoſita*, different, but not contrariant one to another, the *diſcords in true Religion* do ever conſtitute the cleareſt harmony, all extreams are equally odious unto the God of order; exceſſes finde no more acceptance with him, than defects in Religion; *be not righteous overmuch* is a divine dictate (though many times unduly, and unjuſtly pleaded by men) as well as be not *over-much wicked*, Gods *Iſrael* may not turn to the *right or left hand*, departing from the way of his Statutes: the true Chriſtian muſt walk *in all well-pleaſing*, *in every good word, and work*, *and hate every evil way:* It hath been a ſcandalous Blaſphemy (from its very firſt being) of Chriſtianity, to ſay or ſuppoſe it doth direct its ſubjects to do *evil*, *that good may come thereby:* ſincere Saints are ever acted by the Spirit of

Communion is no bar, but a help to reformation.

1 Cor. 11. 13, 14. 15.

2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7.

Eccl. 7. 16, 17.

Deut. 5. 32. 17. 20. 18. 14.

Col. 1. 10.

peace, and love, to seeke and zealously pursue, the *purity of Gods worship in union with his Church*; zeal, care, and contests, for *Reformation of Gods Church, and worship, subjected to the least corruptions*, can never be denied to be the indispensable duty of every Christian: It is true, these are to be expressed and acted by *all lawful*, and *only lawful means*, according to every mans *place and capacity*; the most dreadful *shakings of Gods Arke*, will not warrant *Uzza* to step out of his place to stay it; nor will the greatest *sanctity* in *Israel*, authorize *Chora* to usurp the Priesthood: It is not a more poor apology, than base, for the rebellion of *Dathan*, and *Abyram*, that *all the Lords people are holy*; the God of holinesse needs not, nor will he endure the help of our iniquities: these Cautions observed, *endeavours for reformation* can be by none omitted, or faintly pursued, without an inevitable contracting upon themselves the guilt of those corruptions, which remain upon Gods Church and service; for no rule (in reference to humane society) is in Morality, or Divinity more true than this *error, cui non resistitur approbatur, veritas non quæ non defenditur opprimitur, negligere quippe cum possis deturbare perversos, nihil aliud est quam fovere, nec caret scrupulo societatis occultæ qui manifesto facinori cum potest desinit obviare.* Error not resisted, is allowed, for *silence gives consent*; Truth not defended, is oppressed, for, *Cowardize giveth falshood the Conquest*, to neglect when we can do it, to disturb the wicked, is to cherish them, for *concealment and indulgence is the guard of their designe*, nor can he want a suspition of secret conspiracy, who can, but will not hinder iniquity; for such *Connivance is an act and argument of affection*: let it be remembred old *Elies* sin, by which he fell under the severity of Gods wrath, was his *not reforming the abominations of his sons*; The Reforming Government of many pious Kings of *Judah*, are blotted, with a but *the high places* (which the Temple restored and frequented seemed not worth the heeding) *were not taken away*: *Israel* is charged with the prophanenesse of Gods

Rom. 3. 8, Reformation a duty.

1 Chro. 13. 9. 10, 11.

Numb 16.

2 Sam. 2.

Gods Sanctuary, by reason of the *uncorrected neglect* of the Keepers thereof, and the *non-resistance of false Prophets*, is aggravated with a (*the Prophets prophesy lies in my name, and the people love to have it so*;) It is a matter of admiration to a God of jealousie, that his Church and worship should be overspread with corruption, without the rebuking, and expostulations of an Advocate for him; *the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment; and he saw that there was no man, and he wondred that there was no Intercessor*; the guilt of the incestuous person is by the *neglect of discipline*, charged on the Church of *Corinth*; and the *suffering the woman Jezabel*, is the evil imputed to the Church of *Thyatira*: the light of nature, and Scripture leadeth every one in his *place and capacity* to reform corruption, and chargeth it on their conscience, as a positive duty.

Ezek. 44. 7. 8.
Jer. 5. 31.
Isa. 59. 16.
1 Cor 5.
Rev. 2. 20.

To *damp zeal*, or *barre endeavours for reformation*, and to *blame*, and *violently silence Ministerial rebukes, and argumentation, or popular petitions, supplications, mournings and murmurations*, under and against the corruptions of Gods Church and worship, is *irrational*, *and irreligious*; and the defence thereof by this plea (*viz.*) these *corruptions are confessedly consistent with salvation*; *and such which notwithstanding the most serious and zealous reprovers do not, and professe they dare not separate from, or deny communion with the Church*; is no other than hellish divinity, and Bedlam Reason, best confuted by their wives rebukes of the Queene of Suts preparing her mistriss *sack posset* in the common *wash-bowles* (not to mention a vessel of more base imployment) or presenting to the table his dainty Cates in a dish licked by the dog, and wiped with her dish-clout; the which though it be unhandsome, and unwholsome, is not *poysonous*, and so directly destructive, as to drive them the house or table; so as to begge or starve, rather than to eate or keep good fellowship; such as shall thus do, must needs proclaim themselves *ignorant of the reproving invective Ministery* of the Prophets,

phets, and Apoſtles; yea, of the Lord himſelf, when and whilſt they lived in Communion with the Church of the Jewes; the laſt of whom whipt the money-changers out of the Temple, when and becauſe he acknowledged it, his *Fathers houſe of Prayer*; *inſenſible of the ſad and ſevere judgments of God* on *Eli* and his *ſons* for their uncorrected diſorder, which made Gods people *loath the ſacrifices of the Lord*, when they did not, nor durſt leave his Sanctuary; and on *Solomon* for building high places, though conſiſtent with the Temple of the Lord; and on *Iſrael* for building their poſts beſides his poſts, their Altars beſides his Altars, and ſetting up the Image of jealouſie in the Houſe of the Lord, which yet was not forſaken by him or his people: *and unaffected with the nature and holineſs of God*, who will have *holineſſe* written on all the veſſels of the Sanctuary, and the very bridles of the horſes; and will have all things in his ſervice done *decently and in order*, becauſe he is a God *of order*, *and not of confuſion*; when *Corruption in Gods Church and worſhip* can be denied to be *ſin*, I will allow and adviſe Gods Miniſters to be *ſilent*; and when they grow *ſubſtantiall*, *and vitiate their ſubject*, I will allow and adviſe the *Members of the Church to ſeparate*, but till then I dare not give my conſent, or Countenance unto the one, or the other.

Joh. 2. 16.

1 Kings 11. 31.

Ezek. 43. 8.

Zach. 14. 20.

1 Cor. 14. 33. 40.

Seperation no act of Reformation, but obſtructive thereto.

Reformation and Seperation (whereof *voluntary non Communion* is the privative part, and the firſt formal act) *though* (by the groundleſs Calumny of the enemies to the one, occaſioned by the raſh inconſiderate zeal of the other) *they are confounded*, *are in themſelves vaſtly different*, *and indeed inconſiſtent*, *and deſtructive each to other*; as much as is the *Cleanſing*, *and caſting away a veſſel*; *purging*, *and parting from an houſe*, this is *duty*, but that is *horrid iniquity*; *ſchiſmes* in the Church are *dangerous*, *and diſgraceful*, but ſchiſmes from the Church, is thereunto *deſtructive and damnable* to the ſubjects thereof; the *purity of Gods Worſhip* muſt be purſued in *unity with the Church*; *and Communion* is implied in all endeavours for

Reforma-

Reformation; *deſertion* doth declare *deſtruction*; not *repair* of the houſe is deſired, and deſigned; which of us leave our houſes becauſe not ſo convenient, handſome or healthful as is deſired? or forſake our food becauſe of a ſlovenly Cook or Carver? the Scripture doth deteſt much corruption in Gods Church, and the zeal of many unto the Reformation thereof, provoking and purſuing it unto death, or very deep diſtreſſe, without the leaſt direction unto, or allowance of *ſeparation* or *non-communion*; but with a moſt plain and clear charge and direction to the contrary; Chriſts Apoſtles, (as moſt zealous Reformers) did often, and openly, and with much authority rebuke and reſiſt the diſorder of the Churches, and corrupt adminiſtration of Gods worſhip, yet were ſo farre from approving or adviſing ſeparation, that they have branded the ſubjects thereof, with theſe and the like odious epithites, *they were not of us, and therefore went out from us, theſe are they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the ſpirit*, and taxeth the voluntary non-communicants with a defect, *forſake not the aſſembling of your ſelves as the manner of ſome is*. I cannot without trembling conſider, the circumciſed Sects in the Church of *Coloſſe*, are charged to have *left the head*, by *leaving the body*, in which *all the joynts are knit together to the nouriſhment of the whole*; I cannot but aſſent to that maxim as moſt true, *ex Eccleſia nulla ſalus*, the Church is *Gods Arke of ſalvation*, out of which none but mad men will leap, or leave it, on pretence of purging it, or putting out of it unclean birds and beaſts: in this caſe of conteſt for *Reformation, and communion with the Church under many and great corruptions*; I muſt ſay as our Saviour of the leſſer, and more weighty matters of the Law, *theſe things ye ought to have done, and not leave the other undone*; for *Superſtition* and *Separation* are extreams equally odious, and ominous to Reformation; is it not obvious to every wiſe obſerver, that the Devil and wicked men, do make the one the advantage of the other; and caſt the odium, and direct the force of each (as the turn cometh, and opportunity ſerveth)

John 2. 19.
Jude 19.
Heb 10. 25.
Coll 2. 19.
Luke 11. 42.

ſerveth) againſt ſuch who (ſteering by Scripture Compaſſe) deſire (according to their capacity) to guide Gods Church, and themſelves in her, between theſe two dangerous Rocks into the Haven of reſt and holineſſe.

Whileſt poor deſpicable I in our late years, in my place and Calling, withſtood our *Church-waſting ſeparation*, many profeſſing piety, and purſuing purity in Gods Houſe and Ordinances, were (prejudiced into an high and open perſecution of me) by their own fancy that I *aſſerted and advanced the ſuperſtitions and diſorders of our Church*; by the return whereof God hath convinced them of their raſhneſſe, and conſtrained them to correct their miſtake of his unworthy reproached ſervant: and now God (bleſſed be his name) having *animated me with zeal for perfect, and compleat Reformation*, and acted me in my place and ſphere (as a Miniſter of the Goſpel) to debate the obligations thereunto, beyond my mean abilities, or the logical reply of the adverſaries thereof; (who bear away the victory by a *thou lieſt Bellarmine*; and have confuted me *argumento baculino*, enforced by the ſevere moderation of authority; incenſed by the ſuggeſtion of Treaſon and Sedition ſecretly whiſpered, and generally charged againſt me, whoſe loyalty is moſt legible by both active and paſſive characters) and who have in all the writings which bear my name, declared my abhorrency of Sedition and popular tumults,) and having bleſſed me with an heart, and opportunity to withſtand and witneſſe againſt the deluge of Superſtition and Corruptions, which breaking over, and bearing down ſacred banks, doth (to our ſin and ſhame) again overflow our Church and Nation; how many do now dream I will indulge, and embrace *Separation*; or at leaſt by my *voluntary non-communion* (the firſt act thereof) give ſome countenance unto it? as if between theſe there were no *medium*; but that the *corruption of the one*, muſt neceſſarily *generate the other*, give me therefore leave to tell you, and by you to tell others (in me concerned) I cannot but withſtand the *one*, with abhorrency of the *other*; and keep my diſtance from *ſeparation*,

whil'ſt

whilſt I deſire and endeavour, to ſtave off *Superſtition*; leſt I Shipwrack my ſelf, or others, on either rock; I have obſerved, and our Church hath experienced the ſame, that a *Superſtition, Corruptions and diſorder in Gods houſe and worſhip* do (and therefore call for the zeal and rebukes of Gods Miniſters, and carefull Remedy by his Majeſties Prelates, by him entruſted with the Eccleſiaſticall good of his Subjects) *very much harden men of ſtrong affections, and weak Judgements to ſeparate*, furniſhing them with a clamourous accuſation, who diſcerne not the proper and genuine cauſe of their ſinfull Shiſme, but readily father, (what the Apoſtle hath determined to be) the brat of their own luſt, on any thing which beareth relation thereunto; though but a remote, and accidentall occaſion thereof: ſo *non communion and ſeparation*, is the grand *Removal*, and moſt *Plain ruin to reformation*, that ever could be deviſed: *Subverting* the houſe on pretence and inſtead of ſweeping it; as if an houſe forſaken, and pulled aſunder (one running away with a poſt, another with a beam, to patch up their own ſelf-founded fabricks) were ever like to be purged, and preſerved from uncleaneſs and diſorder: (my good friend) take notice of this; God determined, and his people deſerved the deſtruction of the ten tribes of *Iſrael*, before thoſe who feared God fled from among them, or forſooke them. *Babylon is fallen, ſhe is fallen*, was the voice uttered by the Angel, before, *Come ye out of her my people* was ſounded to the Saints which follow the Lamb; *Conſervation* is the end of *burdenſome Communion*, and *carefull Reformation*; but *diſſolution* is the moſt certain ſequell of *deſertion*; It is Gods and muſh be his peoples laſt work to *depart from and forſake his Sanctuary*; he ſtayes long with a grieved ſtriving Spirit: and ſtands on the very threſhold, with a wooing expoſtulation, *Be thou inſtructed O Jeruſalem, leaſt my Soul depart from thee, and I make thee deſolate*: (the very iſſue of departure) let it be ſeriouſly reſolved: did not Corah in his ſeparating from the Camp of *Iſrael*, gathering a Congregation out of the Congregation: and the Circumciſed Sectaries among the primitive Chriſtians, ſtrike

Superſtition and ſeparation ſtrengthen each other.

1 *Cor.* 3. 3, 4. *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21.

Ier. 13. 2, 7

Ier. 6. 8.

at the foundations, and ſeek to ſubvert the very ſocieties from whence they ſeparated? and do not the practices, and ſome principles of the ſemi-ſeparating (as they would be deemed) ſelfe conſtituting Indèpendents of our age, determine a non-entity; by the non-formality of a Church in *England*, and raze the very foundation thereof, and ſo condemn the very generation of the juſt, who have lived and dyed members thereof, yea Martyrs to the truths of Ieſus Chriſt, againſt Papall, as well as Pagan power and errors? The Anabaptiſts in *Germany* have not been more odious, and obſtructive to *Luthers* reformation; then the Church gathering ſeparatiſts of all ſects have been retarding unto a retrogradation of that in *England*: in that the odium of their ſchiſms ſeconded with *ſedition*, and centred in *Rebellion*, un o *Regicide*, with the confuſion and ſubverſion of our Church and Kingdom, is (moſt ſadly and ſhamefully, though unjuſtly) imputed to all, who with humble and peaceable ſpirits, deſi e and endeavour the caſting out *corruption and diſorder*, from Gods houſe and ordinances; and reflectes on the wo k of reformation it ſelfe, as if their proper genuine and natural parent.

Reformation muſt be by lawfull means

The reformation of the Church is a duty incumbent on every man and member thereof; onely it muſt be purſued in their *places and capacities*, by *juſt and lawful means* without ſchiſm from, (or if poſſible) *in the Church*, or ſedition *in the Common-wealth*, both which my ſoul ever did abhor as diſgraceful to *Religion*, diſhonourable to *God*, and deſtructive to *Reformation*: I never did, nor yet can allow, or adviſe other means of reformation then *Miniſterial admonition* to the Church, *Logical diſpute*, and *Theological argumentation*, and *reſaurgtion* among equals; humble propoſal, petition, and ſupplication to ſuperiors with a *patient*, and *ſubmiſſe attendance* on their pleaſure and on God acting the ſame; ſuch as receive Kings as *nurſing Fathers to the Church*, will rejoyce in them as *Chriſtians*; much more

as

as *profeſſedly reformed*; and with all peaceable *ſubmiſſion*, embrace ſuch degrees of Reformation of the extrinſecall order, and miniſterial method of Gods worſhip (enjoying the ſubſtance in the eſſential form thereof) as they will allow, untill God encline their hearts to allow what himſelfe expecteth, and his people deſire: ſoberly purſuing the *bene eſſe*, with joy in the *eſſe of Religion*, and in *communion with the Church*, waiting on the truth of *Gods ordinances*, quietly attending their Superiors for *purity* and *regularity of diſpenſation*; I find not that the men fearing God in *Iudah*, did tumultuouſly tumble down the high places, nor turn away from Gods Temple becauſe of them; yet their ſtanding was the ſtain of Government to their reforming Kings, to flye out of Gods houſe, or in the face of Gods Vicegerents, becauſe his own appointments are adminiſtred by inſtruments in order to his ſervice unſuitable, and to us offenſive, is a frowardneſs which God cannot nor will not admit, or indulge in any of his children. *Miniſterial reproofs and admonitions, and vulgar mournings and murmurations*, are loud alarums to God and the conſciences of men, and ſtrong enforcements of Reformation: *preces & lacryme* ever were and ſtill are the onely weapons of the truly Godly, under and againſt the oppoſitions of juſt authority, and lawful Princes, ſuch as God hath in his mercy, and by his miraculous providence reſtored to our Church and Nation. I am afflicted by, and aſhamed of the ſlow progreſs, and ſhameful retrogradation of *Englands Reformation*, under and againſt publike, national, ſolemne ſacred bonds (whoſe obligation will abide before God and conſcience, though the affirmations thereof may be intercicted by men) *If Calvin* in his days could ſay, (*If Godly Religion had flouriſhed in* England *till this day* (*the time of* Queen Mary *her Reign*) *there ought to have been an order of ſervice better corrected, and many things quite taken away*. Epiſtle to the Ch. at *Frankford*

Our ſtate and time calleth for an higher degree of Reformation.

Can we without grief conſider our Church hath enjoyed true Religion more then eighty

years

years since that time: and yet we ignorantly continue, and violently contend for that order of service, as if ashamed to *give place unto better things*: yet, I dare not deny her to be a reformed Church, or as such, decline Communion with her: in, and for whom the Lord hath eminently appeared: and out of whom he hath graciously purged all things *venemous* and *destructive* (though some things *unsound*, and *disorderly* were continued, and are retained into her) having defended her against the Spanish Armado, and Popish Conspiracy by Gunpowder, and other agitations, and attempts of Papall power and Antichristian rage, with an Almighty hand and outstretched Arme. I do believe the *infancy of Reformation* might rejoice in, and grow up under that order of *divine service* which the *adult* estate thereof ought to cast off, as puerile and unsuitable. First degrees were matter of *Comfort*, though not of *Content* to such who seek the simplicity of the Gospell: *remaining dregges* ought to be discharged, and I doubt not God will (notwithstanding mens averseness, and opposition) in due time effect it. In the mean time, I see no reason, to refuse to drink because my waters are pudled or presented in an unclean Vessel, and I can come by no purer: remaining degrees of Reformation must be so purified, that those obtained, may not appear to be *disowned* or *despised*: though our order of Divine Service be a *Roman* dregge of some dangerous diffusive influence, yet it is not *Popery*; shall we not blesse God, and rejoyce in *England* as brought out of *Babylon*, though some *Babylonish Vestures*, *Rites*, and *Orders*, which ought to be abandoned are yet retained? I conceive them ingrateful for the *purity obtained*, who run out of Gods house, for the *Corruptions continued*, and *obtruded*: I cannot but repute them *ex æquo* who shall refuse the *Substantials of true Religion*, and Christs Institutions; because of some *rude Rough Appendents*: shall we not acknowledge Gods mercy in affording us, and humbly use the truth of Gods word because transmitted unto us with some humane traditions? and the substance of his own wor-

ship

ſhip celebrated in a diſorderly way, and method, with ſome fooliſh Appendants, of mens inventions? (My good friend) my zeal, care and conteſts for Reformation of this poor Church, have coſt me dear: yet (if God ſuffer the Charge to riſe as high, as did that of my nameſake by the unkindneſs of King *Joaſh*) not one mite too dear: I bleſſe God however my paſſions worke, I ſee no cauſe to repent my bargain: I pray God glorifie himſelf, and edifie his people by my bonds; onely I muſt profeſſe to all that fear God, I ſee no ſufficient cauſe to ſatisfie my Conſcience, or to plead before my God, on which to refuſe *Communion with her*, and attendance on *Gods ſolemn publique worſhip under her rude Miniſterial method*; for that duty is not warrantably ſuperſeded by the *iniquity of another man*; my ſufferings, nor other mens ſin, (under which I mourn, becauſe I cannot mend it) muſt not turn me out of Gods way, to the right or left hand; ſuperſtition, and ſeparation, muſt be ſhunned as Rocks equally dangerous to Gods Church and worſhip: the *prophaneſſe of this and its Subjects* muſt not drive me: nor the pretended *purity and piety of the other*, and *its Subjects* allure or draw me unto the *poſitive evil* of ſeparation, or *privative evil* of voluntary non-Communion; I pray and hope God will keep me upright under, and againſt all temptations, from falling into the extreams of our unhappy age and Church; and yet give me to ſee the purity of his worſhip in Union and Communion with his Church here on earth; or poſſeſſe me with his undefiled, unſtained glory in Heaven; for from the one I dare not depart untill I arrive at the other, leaſt by ſhipwarck I ſhould be deprived of both.

Fourthly, *Let it be conſidered, Scandall is an argument of no ſtrength, when pleaded to ſuperſede or condemn a poſitive duty*; Jobs friends, (like miſerable Comforters) were no little Scandalized, that he would not from his Croſſe *condemne himſelf as wicked*; nor *brand himſelf with Hippocriſy in his paſt piety*, to which they laboured to compell him, by a right Theological, rather then Logical argument. (though not fully Conſi. 4th. offence no argument, in this caſe.

asserted) they that plow iniquity, & sowe wickednes, reap the same; sorrow is the fruit of sin; yet Job well knowing the *Prosperity of the wicked*, and that *God trieth the righteous*, would not let go his integrity; Nor to justifie them, would he let his lips condemn himself, but made his appeal to God his witnes on high, and record which is above; who interposing to moderate the Question, discovered their fallacy and determined they had not *Spoken of him the thing which was right, as did his servant Job*; The Jewes were offended that the Disciples *plucked the ears of Corn on the Sabbath day* (appointed of God for rest) and that our *Saviour on that day healed*: yet our Saviour *mattered not their offence as of any weight*, but justified the facts by the positive duty of preserving mans natural life; If the *Circumstantials of the first Table* must give way to the *Substantials of the Second table of the Law*; and if *obedience* to *humane*, must give place to *Divine command, and authority*; much more must the *offence of a brother*, vail to *obedience* to the will of God: In pleasing men, God must not be displeased: every man must therefore *please his neighbour for his good to edification*. but to please a brother by omission of positive duty (which is formal, fearfull iniquity) is (by sinfull strengthning his prophanes, or Error) *edificare in Gehennam*, to edifie both to Hell, from which the Lord deliver me. Scandal is indeed an argument of more weight (when duly and fitly pleaded) then to be slighted or superficialy evaded: *not to offend a weak brother*, is charged as a duty: we who *are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak*, and not to *please our selves*! Its *good not to eate or drink, nor do any thing whereby thy brother is stumbled, offended or made weak*, are Divine directions and Gospell rules: fearfull is the sin of a Willfull Scandal, for that it is not onely a snare by which a Brother is entangled, and laid on the rack of a Scrupulous conscience, and tortured betwen his own doubts, and the contrary practice of the pious professing obedience to Gods will, But also a stumbling-stone, occasioning to him certain sin; by either acting under his own doubts and against

Iob. 27. 4. 5. 16. 19. 42. 7.

Mark. 2. 23. ad finem.

Luke 13. 15. 16. 17.

Act. 5 29.

Rom. 15. 2.

Scandal is not to be slighted.

Rom. 15. 1.

Rom. 14. 21.

againſt his own apprehenſions induced by the bare example of another, or by uncharitable cenſureing his brother, in what is to him lawfull, and without his own liberty and power to do, or not to do it; this is therefore repreſented to be the *deſtruction of the work of God:* againſt this ſign our Saviour hath denounced a moſt ſad doom, *Whoſoever ſhall offend one of theſe litle ones, it were better for him a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the Sea:* the dread hereof hath ſeized on my ſpirit, in my preſent ſtate and Caſe, that though it become lawfull, could I without ſin withdraw from publique ſolemn worſhip, in an unfitting order, I would on ſence of *Scandal* do it, Scandall is of force, and fitly pleaded to ſuperſede or condemn an action in it ſelf indifferent, and ſo within a mans own power to do, or not to do it; for or againſt which the conſcience may be awed by a ſeemingly religious reaſon; ſuch was the obſerving, or not obſerving a day, the *eating* or not *eating of ſome kind of meates*, or *meates offered unto Idols*, and the like things, which in the *Primitive Churches*, and times of Chriſtianity, the Apoſtles (during the honourable obſequies of the expired law, which had ſometimes, and yet ſeemed, to charge them as duty, or forbid them as iniquity) determined indifferent, and directed *Scandall* of the weak as the caſting graine in the æquilibrious minde of a man (ſatisfyed in conſcience) as to the doing, or not doing the ſame; thereby guiding us in all things and caſes of the like nature; for the indifinite Univerſal, *Eat, drink, or any thing that may Scandalize, offend, or weaken a brother*, adviſed in *Rom.* 14. 21. muſt be reſtrained to this ſpecies, and things of this kind: For what is poſitively forbidden, or commanded, muſt not at any mans pleaſure be done, or left undone: ſimple ſcandal hath no ſtrength. To plead *we are offended*, and not produce a reaſon, at leaſt ſeemingly religious, is a moſt ſimple plea: Jeſus Chriſt is a *ſtone of ſtumbling and a Rock of offence to many*; and yet he muſt be preached and

Rom. 4. 20 *Mat.* 18. 6.

ſcandal is of force in things indifferent.

Rom. 14.

1 Pet. 2. 8.

pro-

profeſſed unto bonds, and death it ſelf. Such as in my caſe pretend ſcandal and offence, I muſt adviſe and intreat to reflect their thoughts, and take heed they do not miſtake the caſe, and miſtake the queſtion, and thereby take offence, where none is given: I confeſs the miniſterial order and method of publique worſhip aud prayer, is *purely humane*, within the power of the *Miniſters* thereof, and ſo indifferent, and ought not to be *preſcribed or impoſed*; when it is as in our common divine ſervice rude, confuſed, and diſorderly, its no leſs *Scandalous* to the ſerious Godly, then was the *adminiſtration of the Sons of Eli*, or *confuſed acclamations of the Church at* Corinth; and ſuch on which if I out of choice, at liberty to enjoy a more ſerious and regular order, (according to the Kings gracious Indulgence granted in his Royal declaration concerning *Eccleſiaſtical affairs*,) ſhould attend, *I* could not but give offence to ſuch as ſeek the *Simplicity of the Goſpell*; and ſeem to them to allow, what I have concluded ought to be aboliſhed, and to build again what I have endeavoured to deſtroy: for extirpation of every thing which is evil (though but extrinſecall, and in the miniſterial method of Gods ordinances) being the extent of zeale, and duty of every member of the Church to be endeavoured in his place and calling, (though however not under a ſpecial, ſolemn, ſacred obligation thereunto,) non-attendance on that order unto, and by embracing of more regular adminiſtration of the ſame ordinances in Communion with the ſame Church, is the leaſt *Act* I could do to the enforcing that end; I cannot beleive the pious *Iſraelites* would have brought their *Sacrifices* unto the *Sons of Eli* (whoſe order made them loath the offerings of the Lord, which they durſt not withhold) if they had enjoyed other Prieſts who would have offered more conformly to divine appointment. But my friend, this is not my caſe or Queſtion, but whether *ſolemn publique Worſhip*, which is my poſitive duty unto the ſanctification of the Lords day and as I am a member of Chriſts Catholick viſible Church, and cannot by reaſon of my confinement be enjoyed without my attendance

tendance, on that Irregular unſuitable method, and confuſed order: may be warrantably ſuperſeded, and omitted on this ground and reaſon, my preſence at ſuch adminiſtrations is offenſive to ſome weake Brethren zealouſly affected to the ſimplicity of the Goſpell, were theſe corruptions abſtracted from, or oppoſed unto Gods worſhip, there were to me no caſe of *Conſcience*, but they are confounded with it, as the unclean veſſel, or ill favoured carving with my food whereby I live) and therein I muſt profeſs it ſatisfieth not my conſcience, nor ſeemeth to me to be of weight, that I muſt offer my ſacrifice, though by the loathſom order of *Elies* ſons, or go to the Temple, though my way lye by the high places, or aſſemble and ſend up my prayer in Gods ſanctuary, though the *Image* of *jealouſie* be ſet up in it, cannot be ſoberly denied; nor ought any to be thereat offended; and I muſt needs reſolve in the affirmative, for the ſuperadded vanities do not *void Gods ordinance:* nor will defect and diſorder, (with which my private capacity is not charged) *diſcharge my poſitive duty*; I am not inſenſible that ſome will be ready to read *my allowance of the ſame*, in my *attendance on it*, unto the hardning of themſelves in ſin, or hindring themſelves in duty, concluding, *Communion in the ordinances* is a conſent unto the order: to ſuch I muſt ſay at *their peril* be it; this ſcandall is *taken* not *given*; this inference is more than the promiſes allow: the Communion of the Prophets, our Lord Ieſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, with the Churches in their time under their many and great corruptions, was not, nor logically could be interpreted, to be an argument of *countenance*, and *approbation* of them, or abatement of the zeale againſt them; nor did they thereby *contract on themſelves the guilt thereof*; the ſpider which diffuſed in wine, doth vitiate its ſubject and make it deſtructive by the very act of Communion, doth ſpread his dirty webbs all over the Vine, and we eat the grapes thereof, without the leaſt of doubt, or danger: the Cities that ſuffer by all unfit matter in their

publike miniſtrations, attend the good inſtructions, and aſſent unto the due propoſals, petitions, or demands, rudely uttered by their Recorder: nor think they themſelves concerned in the broken, blunt, abrupt ſtyle, or confuſed indigeſted method of his diſcourſe: the extrinſecal adjuncts, and miniſterial method of Gods ordinances, is charged on the *Miniſters*, not members of Gods Church: it may indeed add grief or pleaſure to the people, but voyds not the matter of Gods worſhip, or leaveth any guilt on them, who thereby receive, and celebrate it, but do not approve the ſame: the ſpider may indeed ſuck poyſon of the grape, and wicked men may make my duty an occaſion of their iniquity: but neither the one nor the other giveth thereto any proper caſualty: events, accidentalls are no arguments againſt my duty: theſe are not more damnable to them, who infer them, then they would be to me: if I by reaſons thereof decline my duty: my own ſorrow, nor other mens ſin, muſt never ſtave me off from poſitive duty: theſe ſtumbling ſtones and ſcandalous inferences, do, and will ever lye in my way to Heaven: yea to my natural life: Chriſts ſheep muſt drink, and may be hurt by pudled waters: without participation in the polluting pudling guilt only chargeable on the Paſtors, and proud of the flock,
Ezek. 34. none can be offended that I worſhip God, in the ſolemn publike worſhip of his people: nor can without wounding their own ſoul be offended that I do it in this order, (to me diſtaſtful not to Gods worſhip deſtructive) untill my liberty doth manifeſt it to be an act of choice, not of chance: if any hence infer and enforce a *perſecuting conſtraint*, and ſay *theſe men may be compelled to that form of ſervice they will not chuſe*. I ſhall grant it: but adviſe ſuch to ſit down and conſider how this will ſound in Gods eares: or how themſelves will like it to be confined to *unclean veſſels, and order, becauſe they can but will not chuſe in ſuch to eat their meat*; The offence of any who are Godly will be my trouble, and their ſin: but the omiſſion of duty though

but

but for a day will be my tranſgreſſion, as I dare not admit that, as a reaſon of this, and muſt adviſe it be not pleaded.

Fifthly. Let it be conſidered in ſteering this courſe, uſing this liberty, and holding Communion with this very Church, under theſe very corruptions, and by attendance on this very order of ſervice, and ſolemn publike worſhip: *I am not without the caution and conduct of the ſober, godly, learned promoters, and purſuers of a perfect and compleat reformation:* the reformed Churches beyond the Seas, and in *Scotland* obtained higher degrees of reformation, and more purity of ordinances, then did *England* (for power and dominion the chiefeſt reformed Church) yet theſe never did diſown, or decline Communion with her, nor adviſe any her Members thereunto, yet they did often rebuke and complain of her lukewarm hæſitation in the degrees of reformation obtained, and retention of thoſe corruptions which ought to have been expelled among our ſelves: *Tindall, Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, Farrar, Whitaker, Cartwright, Baines, Sibbs, Preſton, Rogers, Geree,* Mr. *Iohn Ball, Langley, Hind, Nicholls,* with many others, the non-conformiſts of *Lincoln, Devon,* and *Cornwall*) beſides thoſe of our preſent age, and yet contemporary with us) all eminent Divines, and Holy men, groaning under theſe retained corruptions, praying for, perſwading, and preſſing after (unto many and great ſufferings) a progreſs in reformation, (unto the pure primitive plaines and ſimplicity of Chriſts own inſtitution) yet lived unto their laſt breath in conſtant Communion with our Church, attending Gods ordinances under theſe very diſorders and irregularities: and did in many things adminiſter according to the form then & now impoſed, and did diſlaſt the *non-communion* of ſuch who loytered out the time of publike prayer, becauſe preſcribed and confuſed: and by preſs and pulpit pleaded againſt the ſeparations of *Brown, Barrow, Iohnſon, Canne,* and their ſeparating followers, and adherents, or

Conſid. 5. This practice is not without preſidence.

non-communicating abettors; as inferring that from the *English Liturgy*, which it would not allow; these good men with zeal reproved the many *Superstitions* continued: but still denied them to be any sufficient ground for *Separation*: from which they ever kept the greater distance, as subverting the very foundation of the Church: and have plainly trodden this tract, in which we must travel, pursuing the purity of worship in Union and Communion with the Church.

I shall not fear to professe, these good men are the patterns to me proposed, (next to the prophets, our Lord Jesus, and the Apostles) and cautionary boighs for the guidance of my zeal for the perfection of *Reformation*, against and past the dangerous extreams of *Superstitions*, *disorderly administrations* of Gods ordinances, and *Church-rendring religion*, *subverting separation*, nor am I herein sensible that our case (because our capacity is so) is different from theirs: onely I wish it to be observed, the difference is graduall not Real, it lieth on the *measure and mode*, not in *matter and Substance*: they were bound to endeavour an extirpation of the *same evil* but not by so strong an obligation: They were in the infancy, we are in the *adult estate* of Reformation, and must therefore esteem the *puerilia*, which were their pleasure our shame: The nature and quality of the *Corruptions*, with the necessity of their expulsion were by them *under dispute*, it has been determined, and that by an Authority (sometime reputed just) and (whatever it will do in politiques) will in point of conscience yet abide a dispute as to its lawfulness: they were entangled in the snares of education, and under the insensible yoakes of unsedsottable subscriptions of *approbation of*, and promise to *administration by this rude order* and confused method: whereby the conscience was awed, and the credit of Religion engaged them (by a burdensome groaning spirit) to bear what they did not see how they could regularly be released from: from all which we are free, and most strictly tyed by contrary obligations: but neither they

nor

nor we might *out of our places and Capacities* attempt a Reformation by any ſedition in the Republique, or ſinfull Schiſme from the Church: Non-communion is no more warantable to us under the ſtrongeſt bonds to reformation, then it was unto them without them: becauſe it is an *evil in it ſelf*: The nature of the (retained, returned) corruptions were the *ſame to them*, they are to us, but to neither a juſtifiable reaſon for Non-communion: The adminiſtration of theſe good men in, and by this corrupt order, I can better excuſe, then juſtifie, or intimate: I beleive *extirpation* to have been their duty as it is mine: and I ſee not how I may act, (though *I* as a private member may and muſt attend, aſſent and give my (Amen) unto right matter, in that order and method with thoſe corrupt Appendants I am bound to extripate; (*Abſtinence from action being the leaſt, and firſt act of extirpation*) in which the private *Chriſtian* is paſſive, purely paſſive, neceſſarily paſſive becauſe he cannot enjoy or attend Gods worſhip in this indiſpenceable duty of holy convocation without it: *I* beleive the miniſterial method of publique worſhip: to have been ſubject to their Judgement, and within their power as *Miniſters of the Goſpell* and *Stewards of the miſteries* of God himſelfe, full and formall Judges of the mode and *order* of diſpenſation (not belonging to or charged on the private members, and objects thereof as to me: In both which reſpects (beſides that ſpecial capacity, in which *I* conclude all the Miniſters of our *Church* now ſtand by that ſpecial obligation which the tranſactions of providence in our unhappy times brought upon us, and our poſterities, and ſucceſſors: I have elſe where profeſſed (and I muſt ſtill profeſs it, as the reſult of my moſt ſerious and deliberate thoughts) *I can keep Communion under that form of worſhip, whereby I cannot adminiſter and heartily ſay Amen to the Matter of thoſe petitions which are put up in an order ſo confuſed, preposterous, and indigeſted, that it ſeems to me to be ſo much below the gravity of the Church, whoſe mouth I muſt be, the ſeriouſneſs of the office whereby I miniſter, the ſanctity of the duty I am to perform, and the ſacred nature of the object to whom they*

Epiſtle to Conſiderators recidives.

are

are presented, that I dare not stand between God and his people with the same; I presume no man will or can deny my capacity as a Minister, to differ from the capacity of a *private Member*, and barr me against, or bind me unto, what the capacity of a private member of the Church doth not barr against or bind unto: *non-administration* may subject me to a suspence of my Ministry, when *non communion* cannot be warranted nor excused; the *restraint of that* must not run me upon the *sin of this*: *I* must (with the pious Israelite) *leave my sacrifice before the Lord* (though with my souls abhorrency of the prophane prepostrous order of administration) when I dare not with *violence snatch the fat of the sacrifice, and act according to the method of the sons of Eli*: I must not leap out of Christs fold, nor leave his pastures, when trodden down by others, because I dare not present his sheep with *puddled waters*: in the one I am passive by other mens sin, in the other my action maketh the sin mine own: Gods substantial worship must not be slighted or refused, because the sinful order of men attend it: *Strait is the gate, narrow is the way which leadeth to life*: whilst I flie from the sin of my *Ministry*, I may be, and must take heed *I* be not split by flying into the sin of a Member of the Church: that guilt may be charged on me in the *collective* body, which *I* must be innocent of in my personal capacity; where the Constitutions of men include, the righteous judgement of God will distinguish and discriminate; all particulars are included in an *universal defection*, but do not perish by it: God will not forget to mark his mourners under *Israels* abominations in his worship, which they could not mend nor avoid: his *Joshua's* and *Caleb's*, who follow him fully, shall not fall short of the land of promise, though all *Israel* fall in the wilderness.

Ezek. 9. 4.

Numb. 14.

Confid. 6.

Sixtly, Let it be considered, my communion with this Church under these corruptions is not more consonant unto the example of these good men of our Church, and the carriage of other reformed Churches, then unto my self, who am (and I hope through divine Grace shall be) *semper idem*: ever since I knew any thing of Religion, and in any measure discovered the wayes of God and his people, I have *grieved for, and contested against the corruptions of his Church*, but

Communion under corrup. is consonant to my own professions.

but

but avoided, abhorred, and oppoſed *ſeparation from*, yea a *non communion with* it, as the much greater evil; though palliated with profeſſions of piety, and pretences of purity, to the ſeduction of the ſimple: ſuch as have ſate under my miniſtery (now clouded by a righteous God) reveiwing their notes, and reflecting their thoughts on what I preached) will find a ſeries of rebukes and admonitions againſt *ſeparation and non-communion*, though enticed by men ſeemingly the moſt holy, and pretences unto the greateſt purity and ſanctity: In the laſt Sermons that I preached from *John* 4. 22. from our Saviours practiſe and pleading for the Church of the Jews, oppoſed to the Samaritans, I affirmed, *Communion with Gods Church under many and great corruptions is not only lawful, but an indiſpenſable duty*; the which I amplified by ſhewing the different nature of corruptions, as *nauſeous* and *venomous*, prejudicial to *health and growth*, or directly *deſtructive*, as *intrinſecal* and vitiating to the ſubject, or *extrinſecal* and converſant about the ſame; notwithſtanding which the ſubject remains the ſame, participation in which contracts guilt (as in offering ſacrifice to an Idol) or contracts no guilt to the Communicant (eating in an amicable friendſhip what *is* offered to an Idol) ſuch as put us out of a *poſſibility of ſalvation* (the only ground of ſeparation) or are therewith conſiſtent, impoſed by others, and ſo their ſin not ſufficient to bar our duty: all which were applyed to the *Popiſh adminiſtrations*, nullifying Chriſts Offices and Ordinances, and ſo neceſſitating ſeparation, polluting by participation: and *Englands corruptions* grieving God and his people, but preſerving Gods worſhip in the ſubſtantial matter, and eſſential form thereof, and ſo no ſufficient to ſuperſede communion: If you look into the writings which bear my name in the world, you will find ſeparation, because of corruption, condemned by reaſons, beyond what the moſt ſerious Church-gathering Separatiſts ever undertook to anſwer, otherwiſe then by rage and reproach (the dialect of reſtrained luſt in that, as well as in this revolution.): Read at your leiſure my *Bethſhemeſh clouded*: *Saints zeal againſt ſinful Altars*: *Virtue and value of Baptiſme*, written many years ſince,

ſome 8. ſome 7. ſome 4. years now paſt.

since, and you will see Mr. *Crofions communion with the Church of England*, is not repugnant to his judgement, more then seven years since declared, and in those very writings lately published (before and for which men have (by Gods permission) brought my light under a bushel) you shall find my *zeal for Reformation* consistent to *union and communion with the Church*; nor did the force of opposing corruption drive me (as *I* might probably have done) to let fall any expressions in favour of *separation*: My logical casuistical Contests for Reformation, do very plainly condemn, and protest against schisme and sedition as thereunto destructive, particularly in my *Analepsis* to Doctor *Gaudens Analysis*, my Argument and Answer is thus concluded: *Whatsoever shall be the establishment in the* Church, *though never so corrupt, yet whilst consistent with salvation, though it may occasion to me suffering, and a suspence of my Ministry by Gods Grace, it shall not effect on me, or such on whome I have influence, Schisme from the Church or a resistance of his Majesties just Authority*; And in my Epistle to the Lyturgicall Considerator considered (in which *I* urge my apprehended grounds for the alteration, and abolition of the *Ministerial* method of solemn publique prayer used in our Church) with a protest for Communion under it, though against administration by it. *I am so much affected to the peace of the Church, that I have of late preached, what (God assisting I am resolved for to practise (viz.) that many, and great corruptions in Gods worship are to be grieved for, and patiently groaned under, before Schisme be consented to, or separation be consulted: Provided nevertheless I be passive, not active in them? I can keep Communion under that form of worship whereby I cannot administer and heartily say Amen to the matter of those petitions which are put up in an order so prepostorous, and indigested, that I dare not stand between God and his people with the same*; The liberty that *I* now pursue; (when obtained and used) is no more than a practice commending on these professions, whereby they are made more legible, not more censurable than they were before.

My

My good friend, Theſe things conſidered, I muſt profeſſe, when ever God ſhall mollifie the hearts of men, into whoſe hands he hath given my preſent liberty; I ſee not any reaſon (that I dare plead before the Lord, or reflect as a barre on my Conſcience) whereupon my ſolitary Sabbaths may be ſweetned, and ſpent with comfort; my paſſage to the publique aſſemblie and worſhip, though in this order, and with theſe appendants which are burdenſome to my ſpirit, ſtanding open; and ſo my abſence being a voluntary act within my own power; If any man profeſſing the fear of God, can produce any, I ſhould be glad, for I fear to be charged with the omiſſion of Gods publique worſhip, celebrated in Chriſt his Church, though with extrinſecal corruption, and in a rude Miniſteriall order, which ought to be reformed; but will not excuſe me, though unforced, by the offence of ſome weak brethren zealouſly affected to the purity of Gods Houſe and Worſhip.

I am not inſenſible, that the Committee of diſcretion, will be no leſſe ready to call me *fool*, for ſteering this courſe, than they were for my entering the Liſts, in defence, and enforcement of Reformation, wherein I am deſerted by my more prudent brethren;) for that I hereby ſtrike off from that party, on whom my former conteſts did ſeem to turn me; But to them I muſt breifly anſwer, I am willing to be *wiſe as a ſerpent*, and reſolved to keep *my innocency as a dove*, ſo long as theſe do correſpond and agree, I have an heart to lodge them; but if *prudence* once obviate or obſtruct *duty*, or *guide* into, or *guard* ſin, I fear the *ſerpent* begins to wind too farre, and getting in the head, will wind in the body, and devour the *dove*, that ſome who have been objects of my oppoſition (becauſe ſubjects of ſeparation) have in my preſent ſufferings embraced me, and ſhewed kindneſſe to me and mine, (beyond ſome more ſpecially charged with it, as their more particular duty.) I am very ſenſible, and thankfully acknowledge to God and them; and hope they

did not thereby deſigne to *charme my zeal againſt what I ever conceived to be ſin*, I confeſs it hath been a check to my comforts, to conſider, ſome triumph in me and my ſufferings, becauſe oppoſed to the ſuperſtitions and prophaneſſe, (which they diſlike) who agree not with me in thoſe poſitive truths, which I have aſſerted; and will be turned in their hearts againſt me, when the ſame two-edged-ſword in my weak hand, ſhall be conſtrained to ſtrike their more civil, ſeemingly ſacred luſts; The *Uſurer* ſtuggs, and hath the Preacher home to dinner, when he preacheth againſt the prodigal profuſal ſpending drunkard; who will hunt and hurry him out of the Pariſh when he ſhall preach againſt *uſury*: I cannot but tell you a paſſage which here befell me; In my cloſe confinement three "perſons, full of ſeeming zeal to piety and purity, "ſtumbled into my chamber, and ſaluted me with this "ſalutation, *we are ſtrangers to you, but in conſcience of* "*our duty are come to viſit you as a ſufferer for Jeſus Chriſt*; to which kind and Chriſtian ſalutation I returned a ſhort admonition that we *might endeavour to underſtand the truths of the Lord Jeſus, and labour to agree in poſitives, for I feared many rejoyced in my ſufferings as negative, and againſt what is groſſely evil*, who would not embrace the *truths I did contend for*; on which theſe perſons zeal boiled over into this angry Taunt; *what I warrant you, you are yet for the Church of England, and your pariſh Churches?* to which I could not but Reply by way of advice, *not to deny the being of the Church, nor renounce union and Communion with it, becauſe of the corruptions in it*; but their zeal brake into rage, and railing, *thou Antichriſt, wilt thou yet uphold the Beaſt and Whore of Rome? are you Antichriſt ſtill?* with many more invectives and expreſſions of outrage, which provoked me to give them this ſhort farewell, *Freinds, reconcile your ſelves to your ſelves, am I a ſufferer for Chriſt, and yet Antichriſt? if you come not to viſit me, come not to vex me*; to all diſſenting friends I cannot but by way of

thanks.

thanks for all their kindneſſe, intreate them to *ſtudy the truths of God I have aſſerted*, and embrace not their force againſt *me*, but againſt *both extreames*; for that love will not laſt, which is founded in preſent contradiction, without conſent in poſitives aſſerted; *Love the Truth, and me for the Truths ſake*, then ſhall ye have the comfort of loving indeed and in truth; It was my hope, and is my prayer, that our retrogradation in Reformation, would have made ſuch who departed from us, to reflect with ſerioufneſſe (even unto Repentance) the experienced remorce of *ſeparating*, *and Church confuſion*, to which *Church-gathering* hath reſolved us; but if men harden themſelves to uphold their ſin, and ſtrengthen their party, (to the utter ſubverſion of this poor Church) and paganizing this Nation, they muſt give leave to truſt God with their *love and kindneſſes*, whilſt to my power I reſiſt their luſts; and let them know I cannot be a *Martyr of Faction*; I hope I can do all things, and ſuffer all things for the truth, and nothing againſt the truth: and muſt all my days purſue Reformation of Gods Ordinances in Union, and Communion with the Church, leaving my ſelf, principles, and practiſes to the judgment of God; knowing it is an eaſie matter for me to be judged and misjudged by men, and yet abide what I am,

Julij 20.
1661

A ſervant to God, his Truth, and Church.

AN

APPENDIX

To the foregoing

LETTER:

IN A

LETTER,

Written in anſwer to one, ſignifying to Mr. CROFTON, the Offence which was taken at his going to CHURCH, And being preſent at the

COMMON-PRAYERS

IN THE

CHAPPEL

IN THE

TOWER

OF

LONDON.

For Mr. Z. C. Priſoner in the Tower.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOU cannot enough believe, how much your renewed *publick Communion, with* we know not whom, *in the Ordinances, which they think cannot but be* materially corrupt, *eſpecially in* that place, *hath grieved and alienated the hearts of the Godly*; *not only* Members, *but* Miniſters: *Defend it how we can, They cenſure it not only* Impolitick, *but* Impious; hardning our Enemies, weakning our Friends, undoing your good Teſtimony, *and* giving away the CAUSE, *it being* æque, *if not* æqualiter; *as if you ſhould Read and Adminiſter the Form: They think there can be no Obligation of Duty, or Edification warranting the one, which may not alſo juſtifie the other. The matter of* Doctrine, *and worſhip of* Prayer, *ſeems to be not only the* objectum ad quem, *but alſo* per quibus, *whether things or perſons*; *wherein they take it for granted, the* Common-Prayer *is corrupt: As when you pray for Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, as* Miniſters *of a ſuperiour Degree (and indeed according to the new corrected Form of Ordination, of the only Holy Order and Inſtitution) wherein they are an Antichriſtian Order, &c. Or if only the Circumſtance of the Form were exceptionable, yet you judge the Nurſe may as well be bound in Duty and Neceſsity to give the Child his bread out of a Chamber-pot, as ſhe her ſelf, or the Child feed themſelves out of it: Plead then you muſt neceſſity, for both or neither; and they expect you ſhould do th' other too* (ſe defendendo) *or elſe ſuperſede*

this

this for the time to come: But if you proceed, I perſwade my ſelf of that very many Brethren which are συγυχεῖ *in the reſt, you will be alone in this; for they can with more patience brook to the preſent, where there be perſonal corruptions in the Matter, than where there are circumſtantial, material Offences in the Form.*

Yours, Bound in your Bonds.

P. E.

FOR

For the Reverend Mr. P. E. to be communicated to other Christian Friends, and the Brethren of the Ministry concerned in his Letter, as scandalized at my Communion with the Church, in the Order of Service, by which I cannot administer.

Good Brother,

GRace and peace abound; yours (no little aggravation of mine affliction) I received, I thereby understand the grief, not only of Brethren in *Christianity*, but in the *Ministry*; because of (what you call *renewed*) *my Communion, with their Church*; in that Service by which I cannot administer: and what is to me more greivous, their Censures of my act, as *impolitick, yea impious, hardning our enemies, weakning our friends, undoing my good testimony, and giving away the Cause*: Sir, such is my esteem of the affections of the godly, that their grief must needs be mine: God is my witnesse, I desire, seek, study their joy; their grief for my duty, can only grieve me in by being groundless; whereby they wound themselves, by wounding him whom God hath greived; and that by most bitter words, sharper then Swords or Razors, *hardning our enemies, weakning our friends*, are easily borne, they are events by accident; beyond the nature and intent of the Act, or the intention of the Agent; resulting from the wickednesse of the one, and weaknesse of the other: to deem this Act, *Impolitick*, I take not ill; all my acts and writings have been such in their account; the Censures of the Committee of discretion, are to me so common, that they passe on me as things of course;

branding with folly what could never be convinced of iniquity; but *impious* doth pierce mine intrails, to shun sin hath been my study, my smart; did not piety bar my policy, I could sleep in as whole a skin as my more prudent Brethren; the fear of God, conscience of duty, provokes this impious act; what a Monster of man hath God made me? my course is nothing but contradictions, *treasonable loyalty*; *schismatical unity*; *impious piety*: yet this is not all, *an undoing of my good testimony, and giving away the Cause*, and so an *Apostate*, can any thing cut deeper? be more clouding to my sufferings? more deprive God of the glory thereof? it pierceth my soul to cry *Lord judge* between me and Brethren, *my witnesse is on high, my Record is above*; I have charity for *Jobs* miserable comforters; they spake well of God, though their arguing reproved not *Job*, for they spake with a mistaken zeal; I believe they were Saints against whom *Paul* appealed; *it is an easie thing for me to be judged of men, my judgment is of the Lord*; The Lord strengthen my patience under this most provoking temptation, that I may with sobriety reason against clamorous censorious Brethren.

My good Brother, where is sobriety? charity? is zeal for purity a *Moses* Serpent, to devour these Graces of the Spirit? *Cave.*

Why is my now attendance on solemn publick worship, branded to be *renewed communion, with you know not whom?* if you mean this of *persons individual*, truly as to the most *I know not whom*, nor can I think you judge it necessary; I cannot in my first communion know it in any Congregation; is *Church gathering* become a Presbyterial principle? is it the work of every age? is seven, not seventy years an age? is *non knowledge* of Members a cause of *non communion*? would not common charity make me know them to be a *society of Christians?* worshippers of the true God in Jesus Christ, and are they not hereby members of the *Church Catholick visible*, particularly divided by local circumscription? or have we renounced this principle? is not

the

the Liberty of the Tower a *particular Church*, in a Presbyterial ſence as well as *Chriſt Church*, or *Allhallows Bread ſtreet*? If I communicate in theſe, muſt I not communicate with I know not whom? may I not *hear the Goſpel preached*, and (in calling on God in the name of Chriſt, for things agreeable to his will) *communicate* with I know not whom? But why is my communion *renewed?* I never denied; I never ceaſed from; I never was cut off from communion with the Engliſh Reformed Church, and its particular Aſſemblies: muſt Independents be verified in the falſe reproach, (*viz.*) *Presbyterial Churches were gathered Churches*? Presbytery interrupted was the Church diſſolved? and Communion abandoned? *Cave.*— We have diſowned, denied, determined ſin, and danger in theſe Notions; I have more charity than to think my ſelf out of *Communion*, becauſe violently debarred from *Convention* with the particular Aſſemblies of the Reformed Engliſh Church. God having at length opened me a door of liberty to attend his ſolemn publick worſhip in this place, with this Aſſembly, why is my acceptance, and uſe thereof clamorouſly condemned as an act not only *impoliti k*, but *impious?* do not you know this is the execution of a reſolution, neither *new* nor *raſh?* not *new*, for I thus determined, and thus *practiſed in my youth*, when piety was reproached by profane men, as *Puritaniſm*, and by the *Browniſts* as *corrupt Communion*: I thus *determined*, and *declared in my publick Miniſtery*, and preaching for Reformation: I thus determined in all my *late diſputes and writings*; whileſt I was at liberty I thus *practiſed on accidental occaſions*; I (herein convinced, and hereof perſwaded) *praved the liberty I now enjoy*, the firſt day I was committed priſoner to this place, and have ever ſince petitioned to enjoy it: this act you know is not *raſh*, but the reſult of mature and deliberate thoughts, beſides what hath paſſed between God and mine own ſoul; I have heard and weighed the objections of *ſeparating* as well as *reforming brethren*; and after many expoſtulations I have (you know it) ſtated my Caſe of Conſcience, drawn up my

reasons, communicated them to Brethren, and Christian Friends; craved a *Confutation* from more than one; prayed fraternal Correption, by solid and serious Argumentation; and professed a readiness to hear, and obey Conviction: I wonder after all this, and Nine Months time to have corrected, convinced my Judgment; I shall be censured for bringing it to Act, and you should now call for an Apology.

Dear Brother, How long shall I complain? when shall I be known, and dealt with as a Brother? Is it fair Play to revile, and not reprove? To condemn, and not confute? Will you neither convince my Conscience, nor be content without Censures, to see me obey it? Are you angry to be imposed on, and yet expect I should live by an implicite Faith; and forbear what is to me a positive Duty, on this bare Reason, *The Brethren will be displeased?* Let me say it without Prophaneness or Levity, *Be not wise overmuch*: The Offence of Brethren hath its place and weight in my Soul; but must be well grounded, before it counterpoize Conscience of positive, indispensable Duty.

I well understand not the Epithites which vilifie my present Act, because they are general, and without Reason.

That it is *Impolitick*, I may not deny; I have ever been estranged to, and at enmity with the Brethrens Policies and Fancy: If they had in some things been as *foolish* as silly I, God might have had more *Glory*, Truth more *Strength*, the Church more Purity and Order, my self more Liberty; their Comforts I know not, nor will adventure to judge: What Policies this Act must relate unto, I know not; unless, it be the *Strengthning*, and so *justifying* those *Schisms* which supplanted, subverted our Reformation, by those *Seditions*, *Rebellions*, *Treasons*, which have made it Odious, and scandalized the endeavours thereof; that the most Upright, and Innocent among us, are pressed under it. If Brethren were sensible, That my Zeal for Reformation is reproached, repelled; and my self, thus oppressed by these Schisms; they would not sure think it *Policy* to strike hands with them; or *Impolitick*, to appear really, as well as verbally against them:

God

God knoweth I may not long ſpeak, let me ſpeak freely: Truly Brother, fooliſh I, think it *aque*, and *æqualiter politick*, for ſerious ſober Reformers, to unite with *Non-communicating*, *Separating*, *Congregational Brethren*, in the Church-confounding, nullifying principles and practiſes: As for our late *King-Killers* to cry up the *COVENANT*, and confound the Quarrel of the Parliament, with the *Good Old Cauſe*. Confound 62. with 52. and you may reconcile 48. to 43. and ſoon return to 48. again: Agree theſe in *Eccleſiaſticks*, and divide them in *Civils* if you can. I wiſh I could not ſcent ſome Brethren (offended at my Act) as tainted already in their Civils: But I am a Fool, be it ſo; yet a Fools Bolt is ſoon ſhot. If *Presbyters* will wiſely ſerve Gods Providence, and do his Church proper Service, Now it is their Time, and Buſineſs to witneſs Corruptions *circa cultum publicum*, will not warrant *Non-communion* with ſeceſſion or ſeparation from a true Church, and ſuch I yet deem *England*: Correct this folly, and I may become wiſe; till then, I will through Grace, joy in my folly. I have obſerved indeed Gods, and the Kings Fools were never many: But truly, fooliſh I, could never judge it good Policy, That *Non-communion*, *Separation*, and the *Sectarian Spawn*, ſhould ſhroud themſelves, and be ſheltered by *Non-conformity* and *Reformation*: Hath not our dear-bought Experience taught us, That the Repute of being the Parent of theſe, hath been the *Remora*, and Retroverſion of that? Can we forget, how theſe, when in Power, did divide, divert, and deſtroy *Reformation*; Paganize all *England*, and plant *One hundred and twenty gathered Churches*, and thereby proclaim *Entity*, not *Purity* of the Churches, was their Quarrel? And ſhall we not now be ſo wiſe, as to diſown, and deny them, as a Baſtard brood: Now they are taken as Vagrants, and whip't up to *Non-conformiſts*, as their reputed Parents? Can we ever witneſs Relation more than by theſe affectionate embraces in this day of Diſcrimination? O! that my Brethrens Policy were ſo wiſe, as to conſider the Duty and Neceſſity of differing *Reformation* and *Separation*, and that they would ponder

der the Honour and Benefit of *Non-conformity*, proteſting, and practiſing againſt *Non-communion*, in this day, when its Enemy doth confound and deſtroy this for the ſake, and under the name of that. But whither am I gone? I muſt come back like a Fool, and tell you, I could never beat it into my Brains, That it was good Policy to run out of an unclean diſordered Houſe, under pretence of cleanſing and regulating the ſame. My little will led me to abide in it, and by a Scrub Beeſom of a raproving Miniſtry, ſuch as I can get, to bring the Duſt about mine Ears: I judge it prudent filth which hangs on my Cloaths, in a regular endeavour to get it out of my Houſe; I am miſtaken, if ever my Houſe will cleanſe it ſelf, if I run and call all others out of it: Once more, and all my wit is waſted; I am an Iriſh man, and never yet was ſo wiſe to lie in the Field, open to cold and wet, becauſe the Beaſts, now only ſtood, but unhandſomly dung'd in my lodging Chamber? I have been uſed to Impoliticks, but am unwilling to be better adviſed. *Impolitick*! That is nothing, Fools may go to Heaven; but my Act is *impious*, This cannot be enacted without good Evidence, it is an high Charge: I pray, wherein lies its *impiety*? This ſeemeth contrary to the general nature of the *Act*; for that is a *Religious Attendance on the Solemn Publick Worſhip of the true God in Jeſus Chriſt*. Irregularity and Diſorder may be an iniquity in the Adminiſtrator; but that the *Attendance on Gods Worſhip diſorderly diſpenſed, is impious in Gods People*, my Bible doth not teach; lend me yours, for I will not periſh in any thing that writeth *impiety* on my Soul; my Charity will not allow me to charge them with *impiety*, who voluntarily attend this Service, only becauſe they do ſo; miſguided Zeal is not always *impious*. I dare not charge our *firſt Reformers*, and *Marian Martyrs*, to have gone to the Stake, under the Guilt, and in the very Act of *impiety*? and yet many of them went embracing, commending, chanting, and concluding their laſt Devotion and Breath, in the *Words*, and *Order of the Common-Prayer*. Gradual Defect will not acquit their Action *impiety*; if it now be, it then was an *Act*

impious

impious to ſerve God by the *Common-Prayer*. Our meaſure of increaſed light, and many Obligations, may aggravate our perſiſtance in it, but will not alter the *nature* of the Act, in it ſelf *impious*. Conſcience bindeth me to be preſent in the Solemn Convocation, and perſonally attend his Publick Worſhip; the which, when I come to it, is by the impious Adminiſtrator, diſpenſed in a rude, diſorderly, irreverend Mode, which maketh it my burden, and my Soul to loath, what I dare not leave, becauſe it is for Matter and eſſential Form the Lords Ordinance: Is this an Act *impious*? Let Brethrens *Piety* work by Charity, to evince the *Impiety*; I will give Glory to God, and return; till then, let me proceed without Cenſure.

You ſpecifie ſome Sequels of this mine attendance on *Solemn Publick Worſhip*, in this Mode and Order; but they are ſuch, as will not convince the ſame of *impiety*; you ſay,

I hereby *weaken Friends*, and *ſtrengthen Enemies*: I pray you how, and wherein? The Friends and Enemies of *Non-Communion* and *Separation*, from the Engliſh Reformed Church, never came into the Calender of my Friends or Enemies; nor were they ever owned by ſober *Non-conformiſts*, conteſting for gradual Reformation: If ſuch be hereby *ſtrengthned, and weakned*; I bleſs God that I have done my Duty, and that my practice doth edifie, whilſt I am not permitted to preach. I muſt confeſs, it is one end of my Action; I account it mine Honour, really to witneſs againſt *Non-communion*, in my very Conflicts for *Reformation*: But if Friends and Enemies to that *Gradual Reformation*, incumbent on our age and hands, be *weakned, or ſtrengthned*, it may be mine *Affliction*, it is not mine *Impiety*; for this Event is by accident, not natural and genuine; the reſult of weakneſs in the one, and wickedneſs in the other, who conſider not that *Non-conforming Communion*, is an indiſpenſable Duty, and eſſential to Church-Reformation. I muſt keep in my houſe if I will cleanſe it, though the filth in it is mine Annoyance: *Circumſtantial Defects*, Redundant Appendants, and Diſorders, will not warrantably diſcharge mine attendance

attendance on the *substantial, and truly existing worship of God*: In this Case, give me leave to say to stumbling Friends and Brethren, you have Zeal, but *not according to knowledge*. I must by *Union* with the Church, seek *Purity* of Ordinances; and none but wilful Fools, or mad Men, will run to the Channel to drink, because men at Sea are glad to drink stinking water, or deny to wash the Vessel, or force all for ever to drink in such unclean Vessels, because some through necessity can, and do drink in such: And yet Brother, I cannot but tell you, I have the comfort of my own Endeavours, to anticipate this *accidental Event*, by those Papers which I passed into the City, with an intent to have passed them into the World; in which you have my Apology for this *Act*: And in Answer to this Objection, I pray God they who stopped their Publication, when they might have done it, may seriously consider the service they have done the Church of God; I could do no more to make *even paths to weak feet*; if those who should, would not pave it, I cannot help it; I am innocent of the blood of all men, who stumble at this Act (in it self lawful) and indispensably necessary, because of those accidents which I have done my part to anticipate.

But you say, I hereby *undo my good Testimony, and give away the Cause in which I appeared*, This beareth indeed an Aspect of *Impiety*; an Apostate is odious to God and men: I have ever resolved (and may ere long prove it) to dye, rather than do this; my Conscience beareth me witness, *All this is come upon me, yet have I not dealt falsly in the Covenant*. Had this been objected by men who knew not Mr. *Crofton*, who never read the Writings for which he suffered, it had been a tolerable mistake; well may others, when my Familiars and Brethren so much mistake my *Testimony*, and misread my *Cause*; well might *Thomas Tomkins* confound me with our late Usurping Traytors, when my *Fellow-Presbyters* confound me with Separatists. I observe you grant my *Testimony* given, is *good*; I wish it had been owned with less fear and shame, I had been then more encouraged in it: But I pray Brother, what was it? Was it the *Cause of separation from*,

or

or *Non-communion* with the English Reformed Church, because corrupt, or Backslider in its Reformation? Have I been all this time a Martyr for Independency? nothing less; *Zachary Crofton a Separatist from*, or *Non-communicant* with a backsliding, corrupt, disordered Church, is as great, as clear a Contradiction, as *Zachary Crofton a Traytor to King* Charles *the Second*: Which of the people who sate under my Ministry, will say, I now undo the *good Testimony I gave*, and *give away the Cause for which I appeared*? Do I now practice otherwise than I have preached? Who hath read the Books for which I suffer, and will say, I, by this Act, *Give away the Cause, and undo my good Testimony*? Read *my Bonds*, pag. 35. *Whatever shall be the establishment in the Church, though never so corrupt, yet whil'st consistent with Salvation, though it may occasion to me Suffering, and Suspention of my Ministry, by Gods Grace it shall not effect in me Schism from the Church.* Read *my Fetters*, pag. 49, 50. *This Reformation cannot justifie the Separation; for that the Corruptions established, were never made a sufficient ground for Separation; sober, serious Non-conformists, who groaned under the burden of these Corruptions, and for this Reformation, were grieved by, and greatly contended against this Separation, as that which wanted sufficient ground.* Read again *mine Epistle* to Mr. *Firmins Lyturgical Considerator*, in pag. 3. *I can keep Communion under that Form of Worship whereby I cannot Administer; and I can heartily say* Amen *to the Matter of those Petitions which are put up in an Order so confused, prepostorous, and indigested; that it seemeth to me to be so much below the Gravity of the Church, whose mouth I must be; the Seriousness of the Office whereby I administer, the Sanctity of the Duty I am to perform, and the Sacred Nature of the Object to whom they are presented, that I dare not stand between God and his people with the same.* This last is part of my Testimony concerning, and against the *Lyturgy it self*: Now Sir, What is my *good Testimony*? Wherein is it *undone*? Am I not practising the *Cause* in the expres state in which I stated it? It was ever far from mine intentions to be an *Advocate*, much less

a *Martyr*, for *Non-communion and Separation*: Non-conformity and Reformation is my *Cause*, hath made my *Testimony*; if I undo, or give away this *Inculca me tanquam salem insipidum*. Good Brother, read me right, and charge me not with *Apostacy*; who drive with all my main, my *good Testimony* against the one, as well as the other, extream of Reformation: You wound your selves, and engage Enemies (by your Censures) to Clamour, and call me *Apostate*: But you cannot convince me, nor any that know me and *my Testimony*, that I am started one hairs breadth from *my Cause*; this condemned practice, is the formal pursuit of my Contest; I must therefore see very good grounds before I give back.

Having answered your Charge of *Impolicy* and *Impiety*, I must consider your suggested Arguments against *mine attendance on Gods Solemn Publick Worship in this place and order*: And truly Brother, these are few and obscure, I understand them not: You speak of *Ordinances, which the Brethren think to be materially corrupt*: I can say no more to this, but only to request they will speak out their thoughts, and specifie the *seeming corrupt matter*, and then I will judge concerning it: And when they come to do this, I think they will find, *Secunda Cogitationes sunt meliores*; they will find it is the *Mode*, not *Matter*, that is corrupt. You say, *The Matter of Doctrine, and Worship of Prayer, seemeth not only to be the* objectum ad quem (I think *quod* more proper) *but* pro quibus; *whether things or persons, wherein they take it for granted the Common-Prayer is corrupt.* This I profess I understand not; What do you mean by the *Matter of Doctrine, and Worship of Prayer*? Are these terms Synonimous? Intend you by them *Doctrine* suggested in, and by *Prayer*? Or the *Credentials of the Common-Prayer-Book*, distinct from the Worship of Prayer? I pray you explain your self, and then know, *Think so, Seemeth so*, and *take for granted*, may be supposed grounds for your *Censures*; but signifie nothing to my *Conviction*; which must be on certainty if it supersede,

what

what I conclude indiſpenſable Duty: Indeed your annexed inſtance maketh me think, you mean the *Matter of Doctrine ſuggeſted by Prayer*; for you ſpecifie *Arch-Biſhops and Biſhops, as a ſuperiour Degree of Miniſtry*; and if ſo, you will give me leave to tell you, you have antidated your Objection; for our Books pray for none but *Biſhops and Curates*, or *Paſtors and Curates*; ſo that till the time of change come, I may (notwithſtanding this Exception) continue my Communion; when the new Book cometh, I may conſider the weight of this Plea; in the mean time I pray you reſolve me, *Will ſingle Errours preached*, much leſs ſuggeſted in Prayer, *warrant Non-communion with a true Church, Non-attendance on Goſpel-Miniſtry, and Gods Solemn Publick Worſhip?* What meaneth, when bindeth that Rule of our Redeemer, *Beware of the Leaven of the Phariſees?* I cannot underſtand by *take heed what you hear?* hear not them *who teach for Doctrines the Traditions of men.* May not a perſonal Diſſent be entered to a Petition, for a miſtaken Object, and ſuggeſting an Errour as its Baſis? Or muſt the whole Prayer for *Matter* generally good, therefore be diſowned? This will neceſſitate, and was the firſt cauſe of *Set-forms of Prayer*, and require that they *compoſed*, be not only communicated *fratribus doctioribus*; but alſo to every *individual Member of the Church*, who muſt join in Prayer; and ſo Sir, we fight well, to flie upon, by flying from a Common-Prayer Book.

You add, The Brethren think mine attendance on it is *aequè*, if not *aequaliter*; *As if I ſhould read or adminiſter by this Form*; *and that there can be no Obligation of Duty, or Edification warranting the one, which may not alſo juſtifie the other.* To this I ſay, *Think ſo* will not convince; but of ſuch who thus think, I would enquire, Is the common ſtate of a Chriſtian, different from the ſpecial ſtate of a Miniſter? And ſo the Capacities, Duties, and Obligations of each different; ſo that the one may be *continued*, while the other doth *ceaſe*. The one may, and muſt be *acted*, when the other is *arreſt-*

ed, superseded, or violently barred; if men of power in the Church will *discapacitate me for the one*, doth it *ipso facto*, *discharge me from the other*? Do our discapacitated Common Councel-men cease to be *Citizens*? Or be they not bound to retain their Relation, and participate or communicate in the common good of the City, under what (they judge to be) the rude and disordered Government thereof? I do not believe the Obligation of my *Ministry* to be *aque*, or *aqualiter*, necessitous and extensive with that of *Christianity*. I must be, and act as a *Christian*, when those conditions are required from me which I cannot yield, and without which I may not be permitted to act as a *Minister*; and those conditions will not discharge the Duties of the one, nor bar the Exercise of them which do bar the other. I a Minister, stand in a *general* and *special* Relation to the Church, and am charged with Duties proper and peculiar to each of these. I may be sinfully imposed on, and restrained from my *special*, by those things which will not bar the Duties of my *general Relation* and Capacity: I conceive *Administration* of Gods Worship, is much different from *Attendance* on Gods Worship; and I stand bound to the last, when I am (justly or unjustly) barred from the first. *Abiathar*, and the *Idolatrous Priests*, were not barred from serving God with the Church, when thrust from serving in the Priests Office. In my *general Relation, as a Member of the Church*, I stand charged, and am capacitated to judge the *Matter, and essential Forms of Gods Worship*; assent to which, is mine only Act: But in my *special Relation, as a Minister*, I stand also charged, and am capacitated to judge the *Ministerial Mode*, and humane Order by which Gods Worship is celebrated; and if herein I be imposed on, and that by an Order rude, irreverend, and unsuitable to God, his Church, or Worship; which right Reason, much less true Religion, will not allow me to receive; I am interrupted in my *Ministerial Office*, the Formality of which is, *As a man to Modifie Gods Institutions*, whereby an intercourse is maintained between God and men; such imposition I judge to be a subversion of *Ministerial*

ſterial Office and Authority; not to be offered by others, or admitted by my ſelf, without great iniquity; and if it therefore be enforced by violence, that I muſt be reſtrained from my *Miniſterial Modification of Gods Ordinances* according to mine Office, and Miniſterial Gifts received; or I may not be permitted to Miniſter, I yet ſtand in my Relation, as a *Member of the Church*, bound to communicate: The *Miniſterial Mode impoſed*, and *ſinfully received* (by ſuch as ſubjugate their Miniſtry) not *vitiating the Subject*, or nullifying the Ordinances of God; will not warrant my Non-attendance on them: It is not equally neceſſitous and obliging, that I a Speaker, pronounce a wild indigeſted Speech, full of Incongruities, Non-ſenſe, and Soleciſms (from which a ſound mind doth bar me) as that I join and concur in the Subſtantials thereof with the Aſſemblies, ſo asking common and certain good things.

I may not caſt off my general Relation, wherein I am *purely paſſive*, becauſe thoſe things are to be perſonally acted in my ſpecial Relation and Capacity, which I cannot without ſin conſent to do, and therefore muſt ſtand ſtill. I cannot beat it into my Brains, that it is *æque*, or *æquliter* to attend, and give an Aſſent unto the *Matter prayed*, as to utter, pronounce, and expreſs the *raw, rude, and diſorderly Speech of the Speaker*: Or that the *Neceſſity* or *Obligation* of the whole Houſe, in this general Order to preſent it ſelf before his Majeſty, which will and doth warrant the one, may juſtifie the other; the Speakers Speech is often cenſured, when the Commons concerned in it are commended and juſtified.

But Sir, Rather than not enforce this Fancy, you will knock me on the Head with a *Chamber-pot*; you urge my neceſſity to Communion, to be the ſame to Miniſtration, and tell me, *I judge the Nurſe is bound in Duty and Neceſſity to give the Child his bread* (his milk had been

been more proper) *out of a Chamber-pot, as she her self; or the Child it self out of it:* An homely Simile, but in a *ſtarving Neceſſity*, I do judge ſo; but I judge Similes do not *currere quatuor pedibus*, there is no aptitude in this to my Caſe, that Neceſſity will conſtrain me to take my Meat in an unclean Veſſel; which will not conſtrain me to give it in that Veſſel to another. I ſuppoſe your Nurſe is poor, who hath no other Veſſel but a *Chamber-pot*; yet I muſt ſuppoſe her a good Huſwife capacitated to make it *clean*: But if her Superiours have ſtripped her of all other, and will bar her from her cleanſing this, I ſuppoſe ſhe is not bound to play the Nurſe, and feed others, though ſhe muſt thus feed her ſelf; if filthy Parents will have ſuch Nurſes, or none, I hope it is in my power to be none of them, I am not bound to it, I am by Nature bound to deny it; and yet I muſt maintain mine own *being* as well as I can: If the *being of Chriſtianity* depend upon my *perſonal Miniſtry*, as my *being*, or *appearing a Chriſtian*, doth on my *Communion* with the Church viſible, your Inference might be of ſome force, but this it doth not: That therefore you may underſtand the difference, keep to ſimilitudes more apt: The King hath Decreed, All the Citizens ſhall each Month preſent their Petitions by a joint Aſſent to the Expreſſions of a Speaker; the Governours of this City direct a courſe by which to deſign different Speakers, they conſult *Matter* to be ſpoken, and the *Mode* of ſpeaking; the firſt is *good, and allowed*; the ſecond is *rude, and diſordered*; the Speakers can better expreſs the deſired Matter, but ſhall not be permitted; are they *æque*, or *æqualiter*, obliged to ſpeak in this *Mode*, as to attend this Aſſembly, and give Aſſent to this common good *Matter* rudely expreſſed by others? Not ſpeaking in this *Mode*, they loſe the Honour and Advantages of the Speakers; but not attending, or aſſenting to the Matter, they loſe the benefit and being of Citizens; are theſe equally to be embraced and purſued? They are bound in the one perſonally

perſonally to *Act*, and denying to ſubjugate their *Judicium rationale*, to the rude Preſcriptions of others, they are barred from it; but reſolved into the common ſtate, in which, *aſſent to the Matter* is their only Act, being wholly and purely paſſive in the preſcribed and impoſed Form and Mode of expreſſion; in your *Chamber-pot* Caſe, you ſuppoſe *Chriſtianity* to depend on my *perſonal Miniſtry* (which my Relation as a Nurſe doth renounce) and then indeed your Inference may be cogent; for then your *Chamber-pot* will ſquare with *du Moulins*, *Fools Coat*; but in my more ſutable and ſociable Caſe, I am bound to *attendance* when, and where I am not bound to *adminiſter*: The Neceſſity of City-Intereſt and Relation, doth bind me to *attendance*, and *aſſent to City-Petitions*; but not to the Duty and Dignity of a Speaker, between the King and the City, from which I am barred by the *irrational impoſition* of an *irregular*, *undue Mode of expreſſion*, in which I muſt perſonally act, by a ſuſpenſe of my *Judicium rationale*, which I am bound to act in this more, and beyond what I muſt judge in my more common Capacity.

Now Sir, I muſt tell you, I know not whom you intend by the Brethren, who are συμψυχοι, in the reſt; ſure I am, they are not *Congregationaliſts*, who have no little blaſphemed the *COVENANT*, by their late Profeſſions for it, and by their *Martyrs* pretences to it, as the Bond of their moſt barbarous, pernitious Treaſons and Impieties; which was by themſelves ſlighted as an *Almanack out of Date*, and prophanely, blaſphemouſly violated before they could, or did conſult and perpetrate the ſame: I cannot ſuppoſe them to be the Brethren, for the late *ſpecifical Difference*, whoſe Policy propounded an interpretation of the *COVENANT*, contrary to the literal ſenſe, and Grammatical Conſtruction thereof; from whom, and which you know, I was απσυχος; it hath been mine unhappineſs, that few of the Brethren have

have been συμψυχοὶ in the preſent concernments of Reformation; nor could I expect it, whilſt I could not be heard to ſpeak; nor was worth reading when I had written.

Again, I muſt tell you that it is my Grief to obſerve that many are συμψυχοὶ in *Negatives*, who are, and are reſolved to be δυσψυχοὶ in *Poſitives*: Theſe agree with me in, and againſt the Diſorders which ſhould *not be*, but diſſent from me in that Order which *ſhould be in the Church*: They conſent, when I ſay, *Miniſters muſt not conform*; but underſtand me not, or affirm me Antichriſtian, when I ſay, *Members muſt communicate*. They own me as *Zealous*, when I cry to the ſons of *Eli*, *You do wickedly, thus rudely to Adminiſter*; but diſown me as impious, when I tell *Iſrael*, *You muſt bring your Offerings to the Lord, though by reaſon of the profane Prieſts, and rude Adminiſtration thereof, your Soul doth loath them.* They like me well, and cry me up, when I ſay, *The Image of Jealouſie provoketh God, and hath brought him down from his Mercy-ſeat, to the Threſhold of the Temple*; but look a ſquint, and cry down, when I tell them, *I will follow, not go before God*; *Iſrael muſt know, and appear in the Temple as Gods houſe, though he be at the Threſhold ready to depart, but not yet gone.* How long ſhall we repreſent the Spirit of *Reformation*, to be a Spirit of *Contradiction*? and verifie that odious Scandal, *That Non-conformiſts condemn every thing, but cannot tell what they would have.* I have obſerved new light is *only reprehenſive*, but true light is alſo *diſcretive* and *directive*.

Good Brother, Deſire ſuch who in this are δυσψυχοὶ, to caſt an eye on that Tract (almoſt loſt in our late Confuſions) which *Cartwright*, *Greet*, *Hilderſham*, *Dod*, *Ball*, *Hind*, *Nicholls*, *Langley*, did tread out, between the *Conformity* then (as now) required; and the *Non-*

communion

communion by the *Brownists*, and *Semiseparatists* then as now pressed, practised, and contested for, with more reviling Censures, than convincing Reasons.

I wish all those ὀλιγόψυχοι Brethren, would seriously study the Nature of *Separation and Non-communion*, and observe the *quality* and *quantity of Corruptions*, which all who have written on that Subject, have concluded may be in a Church, before they constitute a *warrantable Cause of Separation, or Non-communion.* I have not met with any who would not allow, yea, require Communion as a Duty with a Church whose Ministers are *vile*, Members *wicked*, Ministration *rude and disorderly*, Censures *wanting*, or *warding against the power of Godliness*; Worship *polluted*, and in which *Idolatry* is practised, but conjunct with Gods true Worship; their Altars standing by Gods *Altar*; their Post by *his Post*; their Groves and high Places, *in his holy Mountain, near unto his very Temple.* I will not in these Cases except *Cotton*, or *Hooker*; by whose Principles (the being of the Church admitted) I will be bound to defend my present Practice.

Good Brother, Remember, Consider our difference from the former state of these holy men is *Gradual*, not *Real*; the *Duty* or *Impiety* was in nature the same to them, the measure and aggravation is more to us: They indeed acted beyond what I can allow, and in what I can better excuse, than justifie them; but their Arguments for Communion, are armed with Religious Reason, beyond what can be resisted.

If now, *I am left alone* (for I must yet proceed) I shall only note *paucity of Professors*, is attendant on all *Criticisms* of *Christianity*, strait is the Gate. *Joshua* and *Caleb* must follow God *throughly, not turning to the right or left hand.* Gods Worship, disorder'd in its *Ministration* and *Mode*, I attend with Grief; but the *Corruptions*

being *extrinseeal*, *not vitiating the Subject*, under which Gods Worship is for *Matter* and *constitutive Form* his own, I dare not leave it, I dare not but attend it; violent Restraint removed, I have no ground of Faith in neglect hereof, to expect *special Grace* or Presence; I cannot with Confidence appeal to God, with *Lord, Thou wilt have Mercy, not Sacrifice.* As a common Christian, I am charged to *judge the Matter*; as a Minister, the *Mode* and *Order of Gods Worship*; when it is convincingly demonstrated, that these two are *aque*, or *aqualiter*, *necessitous* and *obliging*, I shall either *Conform*, or cease to *Communicate*; till then, I pray you Brethren, receive my Practice as a Comment on my *Cause and Testimony*; and give me leave without your Censures (provoking, justifying the Clamours of the wicked) to walk with my God in Communion with his Church visible, conform to the *commanding Dictates of my Conscience*; This is the Desire of, Sir,

Your Brother,

Constant to God,

And his Covenant.

ZACHARY CROFTON.

FINIS.